Verses of Many Days

William Osborn Stoddard

Ralph P. Stoddard
from his father.

Madison, New Jersey,
Christmas, 1903.
William Stoddard

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VERSES

OF

MANY DAYS.

"O Master, as thou badest me I have done,
And I have made it all a heap of dust
Wherein I cannot see a sign of gold.
How came such worthless ore within the vein?"

Parable of the Mine.

WILLIAM OSBORN STODDARD.

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VERSES OF LONG AGO.

FARM-HOUSE FUN FOR OCTOBER.

LITTLE we note of the weather,
  Or care for the rattling rain,
For now we have brought together
  Our merry old crowd again.

The rain may pelt on the shutters
  And batter the frosty leaves,
But we will not hear what it mutters
  As it dismally drips from the eaves.

The smoke may curl up to the ceiling,
  And the shadows may play on the wall—
We will summon each merriest feeling,
  And thank the good Lord for all.

There is cider down in the cellar,
  And apples there are in the box,
And the spigot comes out very easy,
  And there are no bars there or locks.

The cider shall sparkle in laughter
And the apples be blushes and smiles—
They shall join in the fun we are after,
In foam-crested jugs and red piles.

The flames in the fireplace are glancing
Like the glad light in welcoming eyes,
And the very shadows are dancing
As the musical voices rise.

Then up with the apples and cider,
From the cellar so cool and dim,
And if we have any derider—
Why, the cellar's the place for him.

We will study our fate in the curling
And perfumed rind as it falls—
The hands that shall set it a whirling
May answer the name it calls.

There is joy more fierce and impassioned
Than apples and cider bring,
And our fun is an odd, old-fashioned,
And a rustical sort of thing,

But give us the light and the laughter,
As we gather in front of the fire,
And every old, time-blackened rafter
Shall ring till our fun shall tire.

Our old-fashioned fathers and mothers,
In the good old days, were wise,
And we will not care for these others,
To do what is good in their eyes.

Oh! the fruit is both rosy and golden,
And the juice has an amber flow,
And we'll play we are back in the olden,
The good time, of long ago.

THE STUDENT'S FIRESIDE.

Together, in the firelight, sat my friend and I—
A true, warm friend, that like a brother seems—
Alone; and, while the still time floated by,
We to each other told our dim, uncertain dreams.

Upon our souls we felt the flashing of that light
Whose sunless radiance falls o'er dreams alone,
Or o'er those souls whose dim years, in their flight,
Into one long, vague, glowing dream of life have grown.

Then down into our souls' far depths, on wandering wing,
Our thoughts descended, searching, as with eyes,
For that concealed, though full and gushing, spring,
From whose perennial well our friendships' pure floods rise.

We searched together eagerly, yet found it not,
Though many a green field with its flowing wet,
And many a bright and well-remembered spot,
Through all our souls' memorial vales of light, we met.

Then to the future's cloudland, dim, and bright, and far,
We turned, and strained our long, unwearied gaze
Towards that bright heaven where many a hope-lit star
Shed pure and steady radiance on the doubtful haze.

High rose its wild blue hills and through the tinted air
Which rested, like a dream, their slopes upon,
Fair, well-known forms seemed ever wandering there
And waving spirit hands to bid us hasten on.

The firelight faded, but our future brighter grew,
Till we, in thought, its winding valleys trod ;
Still brighter flashed its castles on our view
And brighter blushed the flowers of that unreal sod.

Our voices hushed: our words came monotone and low,
And seemed like echoes from that far-off clime,
Returned with muffled but continuous flow
From wandering to and fro among those hills sublime.

Then silence came, and with it darkness o'er us fell,
And Hope, beneath their two-fold shadow, wrought
With busy fingers, painting wondrous well
Those dreams,—and in them found we what we sought.

A BOY SONG.

Into the battle of life
Merrily go I :
Wherefore I join the strife
Care I nor know I.

Cheerily, sword in hand,
All foes defying—
Ours is a gallant band,
Winning or dying.

Lo, where our banners wave
O'er the gray targes,
Room is for all the brave
Where the world charges.

There, there, if such my doom,
There rest my ashes,
Where o'er each trampled tomb
Gleam the sword-flashes.

Only I ask, in the
Won battle's cheering,
Some one may think of me—
Sleeping,—not hearing.

SAIL HO!

Sail ho! Oh whither
Beareth your prow?
What cargo thither
Carry you now?

"Seeking a far mart,
Hasting are we,
Bearing a young heart
Over life's sea."

Over the wave, then,
Braving the blast,
Nearing what haven
Sail ye so fast?

"Where we are going,
Waiting our sight,
Softly are flowing
Rivers of light."

Fear ye no trouble?
Know you that ye,
Light as a bubble,
Toss o'er the sea?

"We have a Pilot
Over the wave,
Knowing each islet,
Potent to save."

Scarce we believe you—
Strange is your tale—
Who will receive you
Whither you sail?

"Angels, surrounding
As we draw nigh,
Sweet harps are sounding—
Hear ye?—Good-by!"

LEADERLESS.

I, who have dreamed a life and made of life a dream,
Woke, from my daily wanderings through that inner world,
Into this vision, which did fill my hours of sleep:—
I stood, in all full life of body and of soul,

Upon the mounded centre of a boundless plain,
Whose undulating surface passed the verge of sight,
And all around me, everywhere, behind, before,
Arose the gleaming spears of an embattled host.
Rank beyond rank, they stood, in long and proud
array
Which melted in the dim horizon of that plain.
Helmet and plume and shield and free, unflinching
eyes,
Flashed back the glowing rays of that world's noon-
day sun.
It was a sight to make a man forget all self,
That measureless and mighty mass of breathing power,
And of that countless army I was king and lord :
As I did beckon them they came and went ; and when
I turned my eyes to view them from my royal mound,
From all their furthest files I heard the loud hurrah
That welcomed me and owned the diadem I wore ;
And they were waiting for me 'neath that mid-day
fire,
That I might speak the word and lead them on to war.
Column and line had waited, from the early morn,
Unweary, mustering, forming 'neath my kingly eye,
And now were ready, but the wished command came
not.
The murmur of their voices fell upon mine ear
Like that of ocean when his blue waves watch the
heavens,

In whose calm deep the tarrying north wind waits.
But, though my soul arose and gloried in their
power,
And felt both chief and king, I led their legions not.
Childlike, I watched the sunbeams play among the
ranks,
And heard their battle-shouts as they had music
been ;
With all their drooping plumes, their armor and
their swords,
And banners fair whose flaunting seemed to wave me
on,
I let them idly wait, and did but feast my sense.
Night faded, and the vision passed away,
And this world's sun arose, and then I slept
The daily, waking slumber of my life ;
And then a voice, from whence I know not, came—
" Lead on thy armies, for they are thy thoughts ! "

SOMETIME.

In the horizon's verge,
Where our far future's ever-setting sun
Lights up the skies,
Bright with all glory that the day hath won,
An island lies.

Far o'er the tossing sea,
Beyond all storm and gloom that frown between,
Its hills appear
Forever smiling, in that light serene,
Distinct and clear.

And ever, thitherward,
The wide-winged carrier-birds of promise fly,
And on the shore
The crested waves of hope are dashing high
For evermore.

'Tis an enchanted isle,
That magic "sometime" in the sunset sea,
For know we well
That in its valleys all things bright shall be,
All good shall dwell.

"Sometime," we all believe,
We shall have passed the trouble and the strife,
And in that isle
Enjoy the fulness of sweet summer life,
And rest awhile.

Somehow we know full well
That 'tis an island, though its green hills hide
The distant surge,
And far beyond it other phantoms glide
And isles emerge.

That sometime! Gaze we still!
We cannot help but gaze. Still let us dream!
Far be the hour
When it shall vanish in the sun's last beam,
And smile no more.

SILENTLY.

So swiftly, yet so silently,
Down, down the stream of time,
Whose floods without a wave
Their narrow borders lave!
The strange, low banks alone,
With willows overgrown,
Tell me how swift I pass
Along the floating glass.

So swiftly, yet so silently,
Down, down the stream of time!
No ripples 'neath the prow
Of the bark that bears me now;
And behind I leave no wake,
And the shades I overtake
All silent round me lie,
As the current bears me by.

So swiftly, yet so silently,
Down, down the stream of time!

But oft upon the air
The spirit winds will bear
The sound of waves that roar
Upon some far-off shore:
Waves of some angry sea
I'm nearing,—silently.

THE SOPHOMORE'S DREAM.

My dreams are all of battle scenes,
And, through the silent night,
There comes upon my slumbering ears
The stirring sound of charging cheers,
The tumult of the fight.

The air is full of waving swords
Around my couch of sleep;
I see the polished helmets flash,
I hear the round shields' ringing crash
And the war-cry's music deep.

Sounds of the night, they wake me not,
But oft in dreams I rise,
And, girded with a monarch's power,
I lead my heroes of an hour
Against a foe that flies.

I wear a crown of glory then,
And priceless diamonds gleam
From hilt and cross of that keen steel
My griping fingers thrill to feel
In the right hand of my dream.

Ah ! then, when fast my visions fade,
I mourn, with waking day,
To leave the throbs and thrills of strife,
And wake, in dull and deedless life,
To join a world at play.

My spirit loathes its mid-day dream,
And curses hot are poured,
To don a tattered crown of weeds,
A school-boy's targe of plaited reeds,
A jester's wooden sword.

IN MY ROOM.

She is coming in to talk with me,
In my little room, once more,
And she draws her chair to the table,
As in the days of yore.

The deep eyes of the olden time
Are beaming on me now,
And the same calm shade of counsel
Is waiting on her brow.

And, while I listen, there are two—
  Though I know I'm all alone—
Who with me are communing
  In that low and loving tone.

The throbbings of my heart are still,
  That are wont to be so wild,
While my sister soothes her brother,
  And my mother warns her child.

It is a holy, holy hour,
  And evil flies away,
For the angels of my boyhood
  Are watching me to-day.

METAMORPHOSIS.

A worm of the dust, I crawl
  Among the stones of earth;
    Over the fresh, green grass,
Under the ancient wall,
    With feeble tread I pass,
  Slow-paced, of little worth.

Yet not with haughty scorn
  Dare thou to think of me,—
    God wills the lowliest things:
Saddest and most forlorn
    Shall wear the brightest wings
  In the heaven of life-to-be.

OLD JOHN BROWN, 1859.

In his own pleasant village the old man is lying,
And the winds of his boyhood above him are sighing.

The same bitter power that so wronged him and stung him,
Drove him to madness, and now it has hung him.

Keep ye your pity for those who may need it,
But treasure the lesson he taught you and heed it:

When ye would war with oppression and slavery,
Think of old Brown and his steady-souled bravery,

Shunning his errors, with eyes that are clearer,
But holding, like him, naught than Liberty dearer.

Whom shall we lay it to? Who is to blame?
Of whom shall our curses blacken the name?

Is it the pioneer? Daring to come
Over the prairie to find him a home?

Is it the settler who fell by his plow,
With the lead in his heart, or the gash in his brow?

Is it the soldiery, ruffians and all,
Laughing in scorn of the victims who fall?

Is it the brave old man, erring, but true,
Careless of talking, but daring to do?

Deeper the rottenness; deeper the blame;
Deeper the cause of the terror and shame!

Bear the old warrior home to his rest:
Heap high his native sod o'er his brave breast:

Bury him deep with a tear of regret—
Even his enemies honor him yet.

Lo, what a brave deed hath slavery done!
Call it not yet, though, a victory won:—

If for the victor you gather a crown,
Scatter your flowers on the tomb of old Brown.

IN THE NIGHT.

All day I list for voices
  That do not come to me,
And vainly think I hear them
  Float o'er the evening sea:

They come not in the daytime,
  But every night it seems
That I can hear them speaking low
  Around me, in my dreams.

All day I think of faces,
  And, through the open door,
I look to see them enter
  As in the days of yore :
They come not in the daytime,
  But every night it seems
As if I saw them smiling down
  Upon me, in my dreams.

All day my soul remembers,
  While, fast, before my eyes
The forms that I have loved so
  In other days arise :
'Tis sorrow, in the day-time,
  But every night it seems
As if their souls were with me still
  And loved me, in my dreams.

THE PRAIRIE PLOVER.

The dim mists heavily the prairies cover
  And, through the gray,
The long-drawn, mournful whistle of the plover
  Sounds, far away.

Slowly and faintly now the sun is rising,
Fog-blind and grim,
To find the chill world 'neath him sympathizing
Bluely with him.

Upon the tall grass where the deer are lying
His pale light falls,
While, wailing like some lost wind that is dying,
The plover calls.

Ever the same disconsolate whistle only,
No loftier strains;—
To me it simply means, "Alas, I'm lonely
Upon these plains."

No wonder that these endless, dull dominions
Of roll and knoll
Cause him to pour forth thus, with poised pinions,
His weary soul.

Could I the secret of his note discover,—
Sad, dreary strain,—
I'd sit and whistle, all day, like the plover,
And mean the same.

THE WATCHERS.

Above the mighty city, there, asleep,
Two tall, stern angel-forms a vigil keep.

The one a drawn, keen sword appears to wield :
The other bears the semblance of a shield.

There wait they, looking in each others' eyes,
While, shadowed by their wings, the city lies.

The angel of the shield is strongest now,
And, o'er that ample disk, his vast, fair brow

Bends down benignly, with a mercy large
And godlike, on his blind, unconscious charge.

O Thou to whom our days and lives belong,
Lord, bless him of the shield and keep him strong,

Lest, as to others, our day come, O Lord,
When o'er our walls the angel of the sword

Shall stand alone, in trouble and in shade,
The shield withdrawn, the city's great grave made.

THE GATES OF THE HUDSON.

So bright the day, so clear the sky,
  So grand the scene before me,
My meaner life my soul puts by
  And a better mood comes o'er me.

From under trees whose rustling leaves
Wear all their autumn glory,
I watch the brown fields far below
And the headlands, gray and hoary.

I see the beetling Palisades,
Whose wrinkled brows forever,
In calms and storms, in lights and shades,
Keep watch along the river.

Such watch, of old, the Magi kept
Along the sad Euphrates :—
Our eyeless ones have never slept
And this their solemn fate is :

God built these hills in barrier long
And then he opened through them
These gates of granite, barred so strong
He only might undo them :

Through them He lets the Hudson flow
For slowly counted ages,
The while the nations fade and grow
Around the granite ledges.

He bids these warders watch and wait,
Their vigil ne'er forsaking,
Forever standing by the gate,
Not moving and not speaking.

So, all earth's day, till night shall fall,
When God shall send his orders,
And summon at one trumpet-call
The grim and patient warders.

The guards shall bow, the gates shall close
Upon the obedient river,
And then no more the Hudson flows
Forever and forever.

THE SENTINEL YEAR.

A Fragment.

The bells are tolling in the towers of time
Solemnly, now, for midnight and for morn.
Another sentinel year has paced his rounds,
And, weary of his watch, now grounds his arms,
Gives up his post to the new sentinel,
And gathers him to rest and to his dreams—
Dreams of the strange things that his watch hath seen.

PLATITUDES.

In strife, and blood, and terror,
The world's great fields are won;
In weariness and weakness,
The world's great deeds are done.

The holiest men were martyrs,
  Who found the earth a fire ;
The purest pilgrims fainted
  With waiting and desire.

Only with toil and trouble
  We find our richest gain,
And the great gates of our destiny
  Swing backward but to pain.

Our labor brings us only
  The strength to labor more
And the long road past but nerves us
  For the wearier way before.

THE BIVOUAC.

Over the valleys wide of life
  And among the hills of time,
A mighty army lieth now,
  In a bivouac sublime.

Through the deep night that broodeth low,
  To the stars so far and dim,
Their comrade-voices murmuring rise
  Like a low-sung and broken hymn.

Here have they pitched the camp of God,
For this is the Lord's array;
And the countless warrior-watchfires burn
Wherever they meet to pray.

Sneer not because the army sleeps
With their marching flags all furled;
There's a wakeful watch at every fire,
And their sentries pace the world.

Sneer not! the red morn soon shall rise
Above these hills sublime,
And the mighty host shall muster then,
For God's last war in Time.

MENTAL ACCIDENTS.

You all remember the old Eastern story,
How, on a time, an Arab fisher hoary,
Casting his dull nets 'neath a sheltered lea,
Drew up a lead-sealed bottle, strange to see.

Thinking it only was a common bottle,
He straightway set at work and drew the stopple,
And much amazed was, when the seal he broke,
To see a spirit rushing up like smoke.

The luckless man that sort of thing much fearing,
And, furthermore, some woful threatenings hearing,
Seduced him back to his old place, and then,
Quick as he might, he corked him up again.

Some like this Arab are the men who, casting
Their mental snarl upon the everlasting
Waters of life, bring up, instead of fish,
Some queer, odd thing, shut in some uncouth dish,

The which they never saw before, but, thinking
That the within may be for food or drinking,
They twist the cover off, so strangely wrought,
And, innocent themselves, set free a thought.

In vain they gaze up then, amazed and frightened,
On the huge shape whose fetters they have lightened,
For here does likeness to the Genius cease :
The thought as thankless is for his release,

But he will not re-enter their old bottle,
Nor come again beneath their leaden stopple :
They cannot cast him back into the sea :
Free is the thought, though fools have set him free.

THE DOCTOR AND I.

The Doctor stands in his doorway,
And marks how the rain descends,
And the thunder that follows the lightning,
And the wind that the maples bends.

The Doctor's a man of science,
And knows why the rain comes down,
And why the lightning flashes
From the clouds that above us frown.

He knows, I suppose, why the thunder
From lightning will not divorce ;
And why the tall maples are bending,
And where the wind comes from,—of course.

I'm only a simple farmer,
My brain is not learned like his ;
I but know that the storm a glory,
And the rain a blessing is.

Perhaps, as he watches the tempest,
He enjoys far more than I ;
He deems it a " triumph of science,"
But to me " God passeth by."

But I must not envy the Doctor,
  Though more than this he knows,
And I'm but a prairie farmer,
  In tattered, homespun clothes.

He knows, by his patent rain-gauge,
  Just how much rain was given,
And I by the smile on my corn-fields,—
  But I hope that we both thank Heaven.

MOUNTAINS IN THE DISTANCE.

A Prairie Wish.

I love the sea-like grandeur of this prairie,
  It has a weird, deep charm, beyond resistance;
But, in my eyes, to perfect all this glory,
  There should be blue-capped mountains in the distance.

I was not born here, but where far-off summits
  Arose against the heaven in grim persistence;
And nothing here can seem so home-like ever,
  Because there are no mountains in the distance.

The picture here that spreads out to the horizon,
  It's beauty scorns all earthly art's assistance,
But would the Maker's hand had made a framing—
  Naught less than border mountains in the distance.

Proud heights round which our history might gather,
When to the past some future's present listens,
And gray-haired men grow young to tell their children
What deeds rang through those mountains in the distance,

And say, "Through them our armies marched to battle;
'Mid them, returning, did we mourn our missed ones;
There ever have we checked all feet of foemen,
Among those border mountains in the distance.

"There shall our banners wave in pride forever;
They fail us not, the high, the heaven-kissed ones;
No conqueror's foot shall ever thread the passes
God guards among those mountains in the distance."

There, ever on our prairie, winter mornings,
Beneath the sunbeams we might watch the mist dance,
And half believe our legends lived embodied
'Mid those ancestral mountains in the distance.

It may not be, but still my fancy builds me
  Grim, granite heights, eternal in consistence,
Of those precipitous clouds that high are piling,
  Where I would wish my mountains in the distance.

ON A SICK-BED.

I am weary of pain,—very weary,
  And I wish I could hide me away
From the hand of this foe so bitter,
  Who follows me night and day.

He will go, as if he would leave me
  For a time, but he comes again
With a fierce, quick rush, as 'twere pleasure
  To add a surprise to the pain.

In on my sunniest thinking,
  In on my moments of prayer,
My Bedouin enemy dashes—
  His thoughts then are all I can bear.

He has darkened my soul's inner sunshine,
  And clouded the bright June day,
Even now I can feel the sharp footsteps
  With which he treads down my poor clay.

But it is not so hard in the day-time,
With light and life on my side,
As when loneliness, midnight, and silence
Around me like treachery glide.

Then he, my disease and my sorrow,
Assails me, unnerved and alone,
And his gripe is like that of a demon
As he fastens on muscle and bone,

And we struggle there in the night-time,
With a grapple of life and death,
And sometimes I feel I am under,
And I pray for strength and for breath.

Thus far I have baffled, or thrown him,
Or at least held my own in the field:
But some day the strife must be final,
And I or my foeman must yield.

TO THE REV. MR. ——.

(At Family Prayers.)

No matter how weary we feel,
No matter how nearly asleep,
If only you get us to kneel,
Just see how long you can keep

The prayer a-going !
What the result may be
The rest of us can't foresee,
But there's no knowing

But what, to-night, in our dreams,—
Our other dreams, I mean,—
When every tired soul deems
The day's work all done clean
And its toil completed,
In some dull and monotonous hum
We may think you again have come,
And it's being repeated.

THE MAIDEN'S DREAM.

The little girl read in her fairy book,
Strange tales of that old, old time,
And of wonderful things that happened then
In that far-off, wonderful clime.

She read of the cottage girl who sat
In her door, at the close of day,
And the beautiful prince that on horseback came
And carried her far away :

Far away to a palace bright,
In a city of gold by the sea,
And there, forever, in love and light,
A beautiful queen reigned she.

The little girl slept o'er her book and dreamed,
And over her slumbering brain
The tale she had read, of the beautiful prince
And the cottage girl, came again ;

But, somehow, the cottage girl wore her hair,
And her dress and her form were the same,
And, when the beautiful prince came by,
Her called her her own sweet name,

And she was the cottage girl who rode
The lady and queen to be,
And to live for aye with her beautiful prince
In the city of gold, by the sea.

Now, in every maiden heart that breathes,
By mountain, valley, or stream,
Whether they read the old tale or not,
Hovers the same sweet dream :

In the sacred place of their virgin souls,
Where other dreams come not in,
Hid from the world's unkindly eyes
And the soiling breath of sin :

And each one deems it a prophet's voice,
  And so it may prove to some,
But they all sit down like the cottage girl
  And wait for their prince to come.

VERSES

OF

NOT SO LONG AGO.

VERSES OF NOT SO LONG AGO.

"ONE OF THESE DAYS."

By the glimmering light of our hopes and fears,
We can all of us see, through the misty years,
A sort of a ghost, half light, half haze,
While we say,
In a careless or thoughtful way,
"One of these days:"

A ghost of a day that shall all be bright
When the mist shall melt from the skies of light,—
Sweet ghost! that only our love arrays
While we say,
In our careless or thoughtful way,
"One of these days."

Palaces flash on a beautiful shore,
Jewels look out from their glittering ore,
And life is for us but a blush and a blaze
While we say,
In our careless or thoughtful way,
"One of these days."

All is possible :—all may be :
Is the ghost a promise? O, shall we see
Aught of the good for which each one prays,
While we say,
In our careless or thoughtful way,
"One of these days"?

THE CITY OF YOUTH.

In the desert land God gave to me,
That owed no homage save to me,
I was a king, of old :
Far o'er the lonely sands I gazed,
And with my royal hands I raised
A templed town that grandly blazed—
Marble and gems and gold.

I planted palms around it, there,
And trained the vines, and found it fair,
And made my kingly home
Where hanging gardens sought the light,
And, o'er broad noon, shade brought the night,
And deemed that I had wrought it right
And crowned it with a dome.

Around my town I builded walls
To guard my gay and gilded halls,

And all my fairy bowers
Were circled by the bristling crests
Of ramparts, on whose listening breasts
My warriors, in their glistening vests,
Kept watch for all my towers.

I heeded not that, far away,
The weary waste still marred the day,
While all my work was mine:
And thought my long endeavor o'er,
Nor dreamed that fate, however sore,
From me could part, for evermore,
My realm so fair and fine.

But ebbing time brought woe and shame!
Across the desert foemen came
And battered down my towers.
My slaughtered warriors bled in vain,
My bravest fought but fled again,
And thickly strewn the dead were lain
Among my pleasure bowers.

Sad, in the ruins now I wait,
And 'mid the ashes bow to fate
And on the desert gaze,
And deem that no world's way is right,
And fear that what men say is light
Is darkness and the day is night,
For all its burning rays.

The shadows mock the solemn walls,
For every hour some column falls
In fragments at my feet:
In frowning fierceness lowers the sky;
In weary pain the hours go by;
I mourn my vanished powers, and I
Could find oblivion sweet.

THE DYING TREE IN THE CITY.

Above, the clouds are flying
Dark and grim,
Where the worn-out tree is dying
Limb by limb.

I hear the sad winds mutter
As they blow,
And I know the things they utter,
Talking low.

They are telling of the wildwood,
Far and free:
They are whispering of its childhood
To the tree,

And they bid it make election
Now to die,
And they promise resurrection
By and by;

That its seeds o'er dell and mountain
They will bear,
And, by some bright, far-off fountain,
Plant with care;

And the dying tree believes them,
Whispering saints,
And his germs,—each gust receives them
While he faints.

They will bear them o'er the mountain
When he dies,
And, by some bright, far-off fountain,
He shall rise.

SECRETS.

No man may judge by the surface
What currents may sweep below,
Nor tell by the froth and the ripple
The strength of the hidden flow.

Down in the deep lie anchors,
Lost from such wrecks as drown,
When the sea is lashed to madness,
And hope and love go down.

Down in the deep are timbers,
  Heavy with watery years,
And ropes that sway like memories
  In that sea so salt with tears.

Down in the deep are phantoms,
  Skeletons white and bare,
And with dead eyes they watch the dashing
  Of the waves on the surface fair.

Oh, how the deep is peopled !
  How the unseen world, below,
With its relics of wreck and of ruin,
  Moves moodily to and fro !

Under the gilding sunshine
  The surface may laugh or sleep,
But no man is ready for judgment
  Till his eyes have searched the deep.

TO FREDDY.

Funny thing a baby is,—
  Curious little creature,—
Funny is its little phiz,
  Comic, every feature.

Helpless thing a baby is,
  Tiny hands uplifting,
O'er the troubled tide of life
  Into which 'tis drifting.

Mystery a baby is,—
  Memories of Heaven
Still must linger in the soul
  Such a short time given.

Solemn thing a baby is,
  Since it must inherit
All the loss and gain of life,
  All the sin and merit.

Funny, helpless, mystic, sad,
  Let me tell you, Freddy,
Half the good and sweet of life
  Is the getting ready.

Yours the sunshine,—take it all
  While you're weak and tiny ;
By and by the days that come
  May not be so shiny.

A PICTURE.

(Saturday Night on the Arkansas.)

Saturday night: the sun is going down;
The purple light glows on the river's breast,
Far in the east the dull clouds watch and frown,
Jealous of all the glory in the west;

The listless trees lean out along the shore,
To watch their shadows lengthen down the tide;
And, far above us, slowly floating o'er,
The weary birds on homeward pinions glide.

The steamer, on the sand-bar fast asleep,
Tired with the week's long labor, heavily lies:
Longer and longer still the shadows creep,
And evening mists from out the distance rise.

All things in peace and patience seem to wait,
As if in faith that, when the morning came,
The sun would once more light his golden gate
With all the glory of his entering flame.

FOR "LIN."

I see him, at his window by the river,
Waiting for Lin,
And muttering, "Will she never, never
Be coming in?"

And, when he sleeps, I think I see the dreamer—
Dreaming's no sin—
Taking the bedpost for some chimneyed steamer,
Bringing him Lin.

I think he may be weary of his waiting,
And waxing thin;
And even fear he has prepared a rating
For wandering Lin.

Well, never mind,—the end of all his sorrow
He soon will win:
The steamer will go on again to-morrow,
And then—O, Lin!

THE RIVER'S LESSON.

(On a Bar of the Arkansas.)

Under the canopied bank we lie,
And the muddy river is rushing by,
Yellow and foul from its eddying stray
Through a thousand miles of wandering way,
Gross and turbid:—and yet, I know
That this same troubled and mingled flow
Shall one day clear as the crystal be,
After it dies in the deep, far sea.

I have watched it long, with an aching brow,
Bending above it, and wonder now
If the river, so full of grime and strife,
May not be an emblem of human life,
And if many a soul that has wandered and toiled,
All corrupted and gross and soiled,
At the end may not calmly glide
Into that last great swallowing tide,
And clear and pure as the crystal be,
After it dies in that deep, far sea.

BETROTHED :—WEDDED.

Two rings : two golden memories
  Of happy days gone by ;
Within their shining circles
  How many bright thoughts lie !

It seems as if, like readers
  From open books, they told
The pleasant things there written
  In characters of gold.

They talk to me when I'm lonely,
  And now they are telling me,
As the dumb do, through my fingers,
  Of happier days to be.

VEXATION.

For Lin.

I am here on the sandy bar,
And around me the evening is settling dim,
And he is still in the distance far,
And somebody else is talking to him.

I do not care for the weary stay,
Nor the muddy river, so dull and grim;
But only that he is far away,
And somebody else is talking to him.

I should be there instead of here!
My cup of vexation fills to the brim
When I think of it all, and then I fear
That somebody else is talking to him.

THE DISTURBER.

I think I could sleep o' nights,
And rest from my labors,
Were it not for the troubled soul
Of that dog of my neighbor's.

If the watchman on his round
  Is solemnly stalking,
Or, almost without a sound,
  The sneak thief is walking,

Or if at some serenade
  Some lover is playing,
Or into some hideous raid
  The rowdies are straying,

All is the same to him,
  He takes all for music,
And howls at his part with a din
  That would make Charon's crew sick.

I think he will die some night,
  By the hand of some prowling
Wretch who was trying to sleep,
  But who failed for that howling.

A CAMP SONG.

Our men are in our bannered lines,
But far beneath the snow-bent pines
    Are, hoping and waiting,
The saddest hearts on all the earth,
Our women by the lonely hearth.

Not only 'neath the southern sun
Our martyrs suffer, one by one,
But, hoping and waiting,
The truest hearts on all the earth,
Our women by the lonely hearth.

Our holy trust our swords must keep,
For men may die, but must not weep:
But hoping and waiting,
The noblest hearts on all the earth,
Our women by the lonely hearth.

CHANT OF THE PEOPLE.

1864.

March, march, march, our living armies tread,
With their flags that proudly tell of fields where they have bled,
But prouder banners wave
Where bayonet and glaive
Lead on the armies of our hero dead.

March, march, march, O martyrs of our cause;
O great souls gone before for freedom's land and laws,
In glory's heavenward race
Keep still your foremost place,
We follow in your steps without a pause.

March, march, march, our endless column comes,
To seek, where fever waits and the ragged bullet hums,
A glory like to yours,
That evermore endures,
And summons more than many a roll of drums.

ALATOONA.

Dismounted from his horse
On the summit of the hill,
Stood our gallant General Corse,
And he stood erect and still.

He could see them, far below,
From the summit where he stood,
He could see them come and go—
All the rebels under Hood.

Through the shadows of the trees
He could see them form their lines;
They were gathering like bees
Beneath the oaks and pines,

And the hero watched them now,
As a man may look on death,
With a clouding of the brow,
And a quickening of the breath,

For the rebels were a host
That hourly swelled and grew,
While around him at his post
The loyal men were few.

Then heavenward looked he,
And a prayer was in his eyes,
But the banner of the free
Waved between him and the skies

And the blue of heaven was blent
With its stars, as if, just then,
'Twas an answer God had sent
To the leader and his men.

Up the hill the flag of truce
With its folds of dingy white,
Came creeping to seduce
Our general from the fight.

And the message that it brought
From the rebel in the wood,
Was as if some coward wrought
As a scribe for General Hood.

"Now yield ye to our strength,
Ere we come with might and main:
For yield ye must, at length,
And the bloodshed will be vain."

On the flag gazed General Corse,
As in thought but not in doubt,
Then he leaned upon his horse
And he wrote this answer out :

" Ye may come whene'er ye will,
Ye may come with might and main ;
I will answer for it still,
That the bloodshed is not vain."

Back, underneath the trees,
Crept the flag of truce, and then,
Like clouds of climbing bees,
All the valley swarmed with men.

No pen can paint the strife
Of that long and desperate fight,
Where we gave life after life
For our flag and for the right.

Then down we saw them reel,
For all that bloody morn
They had sunk 'neath shot and steel,
Like rows of harvest corn.

Bleeding and faint our chief,
But watching still, he stood,
With a smile of grim relief,
The retreating ranks of Hood.

Murmured he: "I mourn the dead,
And blood has poured like rain,
But true was the word I said,
For the shedding was not vain."

THE BEST TIME.

I have read, in the lays of the Norman gleemen,
Of the last great fight of the Saxon freemen,
And how, that day,
In the very front of the first rank lying,
Where thickest were strewn the dead and the dying,
The good king lay.

Dead by the standard among his brothers—
Ah, 'twas a death that above all others
Became a king!
Nothing in life could ever have crowned him
With half the glory that gathered around him
In that stern ring.

An hour and a way to his death, God giveth
To every soul on the earth that liveth,
A golden boon,
And they who lose it, weakly or blindly,
Win but a meaner fate, unkindly,
Too late or soon.

God give me the day of the Saxon freemen,
As I read in the lay of the Norman gleemen !
The rough old rhyme
Tells of a king who found, in dying,
With all his heroes around him lying,
God's own best time.

MY LIFE AND I.

My life and I are good friends yet,
And we will not part to-day ;
We have smoothed the wrinkles and dried the tears,
And the grass grows green o'er the buried years,
And of all the days whose suns are set
We remember the light and the gloom forget—
And all that's past the more endears—
My life and I, to-day.

My life and I had quarrelled sore,
And were like to part, one day ;
For we thought too much of the weary past,
Of the sweet flowers faded, the skies o'ercast,
We pined for the faces that came no more,
We grieved the old griefs o'er and o'er—
Till out of grief came strife, at last—
My life and I, one day.

My life and I let all go by
And make new friends to-day ;
We walk in the morning by summer seas,
And breathe fresh hope in the quickening breeze,
And the birds of promise above us fly
Towards a fairer home, 'neath a brighter sky,
And we fear not what our fate decrees,
My life and I, to-day.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

From a time long since forgotten,
In my boyhood's earlier day,
I have kept one worthy custom
Which I will not cast away.

Whatever web of fortune
My changing fates may spin,
I always watch the old year out
And welcome the new year in.

To-night I wait in my chamber,
Sitting with half-closed eyes,
And over my lonely spirit
The hour's deep shadow lies.

I am not alone, though lonely,
For around me gather fast
The shapes that belong to the future
And the shades that arise from the past.

All bright, with widening pinions,
Gilded with hope and light,
The forms of the time that's coming
People the silent night.

With drooping wings close folded,
The memories round me stand,
Till hope with memory mingles
And they greet me hand in hand.

I cannot say which is dearer,
For they all are near of kin;
And they all shall be my companions
Till I welcome the new year in.

STRANDED.

Over the billows long
I was a swimmer strong,
Parting the foam;
Winter wind, summer breeze,
Frozen tide, laughing seas—
Swam I with equal ease—
Strife was my home.

Salt blew the angry spray,
Warm grew the sunny day,
  Little cared I—
    Ever there seemed to me,
    Far o'er the tossing sea,
    Green isles where rest might be
  Mine, by and by.

Now I shall swim no more :
Cast on a desert shore,
  Stranded, alone,
    No hope of sunny isles
    In the horizon smiles,
    Hope nevermore beguiles
  When strength has flown.

Picking, with listless hand,
Shells from the dull sea-sand,
  Watching the strife—
    Wondering why e'er to me
    'Twas such a joy to be
    Cleaving the struggling sea,
  Wondering at life.

THE WIZARD OF LIFE.

The wizard of my youth is mocked, to-night,
And watches, pale and muttering, o'er the coals
Of half-dead fire, whose wan and waning light
Quivers and trembles when the thunder rolls.

Here, at life's cross-roads, he had sought his hour,
And drawn his diagrams, and fed his blaze,
And filled his crucibles, while spells of power
He drew o'er all the sand in magic maze.

My wizard, Hope—the Magian of my youth—
And he has called on all his powers in vain!
They have but mocked him, speaking bitter truth,
Which bitterer laughter echoed back again.

The air is full of shadows vast and grim,
Who borrow semblances from all the past
And paint strange figures on the night-mist dim,
And bid me in them read my fate, at last.

I will not read! O wizard, bid them down!
Here at life's cross-roads I will wait the morn,
Though all the past untomb its fiends to frown
And all thy broken spells mock back in scorn.

My Magian, Hope!—con o'er thy books again,
But read them all by sunlight. Thou shall call
But on life's heaven—the future. All in vain
This lifting from the coffined years their pall.

And all the sunlit time to come shall hear,
And forms of strength and beauty fast shall rise—
My Magian, Hope, let us lay by our fear,
And laugh the grim night back its phantom lies.

PHILOSOPHY.

Safe in my corner I look on the dancing,—
Happy am I,
Careless alike of the twinkling and glancing
Feet, as they fly,
And the swift-winged hours that, so gayly advancing,
Bid us good by,
Ere we are weary enough of our dancing,—
Happy am I.

Safe from my window I gaze while the prancing
Horses go by :
Why should I keep any thought from romancing ?
Careless am I
Whether the music which sabre and lance ring
Shortly shall die,
And the plumes wither low on the crests that are dancing,—
Happy am I.

All the world moves in a quickstep, advancing
Faster than I;
I who am weary of riding and dancing
Let them go by,
Seeking the pleasures which trouble and chance bring,
Pleasures that fly—
Window and corner will do for romancing,—
Happy am I.

"AND THEY SHALL WALK IN WHITE."

Above the sacred pages
I lean and muse, to night,
On all the stormy ages
Of which they were the light.

I close my eyes, and deeper
The holy silence grows,
While, as I were a sleeper,
A vision round me glows.

A grand, a wondrous column
Comes by me in review,
With stately march and solemn,
All goodly men and true.

From every generation
  Since Adam turned the sod,
From every tribe and nation—
  The men who stood for God.

The little ones and weakly,
  But weak no longer now:
The holy ones, who meekly
  Their heads no longer bow:

The martyred ones, the sainted,
  Who found the earth a fire:
The weary souls who fainted
  With waiting and desire:

The prophets, low or royal:
  The priests and bards of old:
All who to God were loyal
  Through perils manifold.

Amid the great assembling
  Is many a shining face
That pallidly and trembling
  Fought on, to win that place.

The host of the forgiven,
  The army of the blest,
Who here have toiled and striven
  But now have found their rest:

For them no more contrition,
For all their robes are white,
O holy, God-lit vision!
O army clothed in light!

O holy march and solemn!
I know upon what shore
The cohorts of that column
Will camp for evermore:

I know what fruits the Giver
Has gathered for their ease,
By what eternal river,
'Neath what unfading trees.

Here have I learned the story
Of all the path they trod,
Ere they could walk in glory
Before the throne of God.

AT BAY.

Once more my grasp is riven,
And once more, backward driven,
I strive in vain,
But, with my teeth hard set,
I struggle forward yet—
The trouble must be met
Whate'er the strain.

I know some future needs me:
I know some strong hand leads me;
And if, to-day,
The hunters round me press,
I'll deem it a success
And glory, none the less,
To stand at bay.

In every written story
The meed of brightest glory
Was all his own
Who would not know defeat,
Whose soul could not retreat,
But every foe would meet,
Though all alone.

My very heart is singing
A war-song, proud and ringing,
And now, once more,
I nerve me for the fray,
And care not whether day
Or night be round my way—
'Twill soon be o'er.

I know some future needs me,
I know a strong hand leads me

From strength to strength—
  Then forward, strong and straight!
  Now, either soon or late,
  The prize I seek and wait
Is mine, at length.

PAINTED PEACHES.

The peaches from their basket
  May o'er the canvas fall,
But it only mocks the summer
  To hang them on the wall.

I sit and think of sunshine
  And golden days of old,
When, under cooling shadows,
  Such luscious beauties rolled.

I think of merry faces
  That sought the shade with me—
They are not in the picture,
  And I think they ought to be.

Again I taste that melting—
  Again my memory sips
The fruit that broke so sweetly
  Upon my eager lips.

Perhaps it was the peaches—
It may be they were all—
But need the memory mock me
By hanging on the wall?

THANKSGIVING IMPROMPTU FOR THE TURKEY.

"Bluffside," 1867.

The turkey is an emblem,
In a way, of bigger things:
We do not think of angels
When we measure up his wings,

But there's very much that's human
In the way the fellow fares,
And if you will but listen
I'll tell you how he shares

The luck of other bipeds
Who gobble as they go—
And whose usefulness and trouble
Together come, you know.

'Tis not when he is walking
So grandly up and down,
As if he were a president,
Or thought he owned the town,

That we esteem him highest,
  Or speak the loudest word
Of praise and admiration
  For the proud and lordly bird.

But, when they stop his gobble,
  And pull his feathers out,
And fill him full of bitterness,
  And clothe him round about

With fires of persecution
  That melt his grandeur down,
And all his fair complexion
  Becomes a russet brown,

Then, when he cannot help himself,
  But lifts a stumpy leg
As if he gave the matter up
  And only cared to beg,

Then is it that his virtues
  The brightest seem to shine;
'Tis then he stands the highest
  In your regard and mine;

Then, full of commendation,
  We stretch him on the plate,
And think that any turkey
  Might glory in his fate.

A FANCY.

I scared the wild steed from his lair
  Among the endless meadows,
And he vanished away in the night—
  A shade among the shadows—

With bound on bound through the dark,
  He knew not why or whither,
And he should have carried me,
  For I am going thither.

The swift feet knew no guide,
  The foam-flecked mouth no bridle,
And guide and curb for me
  Have been as weak and idle.

Had the wild steed been my hope,
  I would have sprung, unbidden,
Upon the wanderer's back,
  And all night long have ridden.

THE VALLEY VILLAGE.

I am sitting by my window,
  In the city by the sea;
    And the hum of the multitudinous life,
      And the sound of the homeward moving feet
    That, after the weary day's long strife,
      Now echo along the street,
  Comes dreamily up to me.

The flood of the summer moonlight,
The glory of sweet, warm June,
In a vail of misty radiance falls
Over the dusty green of the trees
And over the red and white of the walls,
And the voice of the evening breeze
Rustles a low, soft tune.

But my heart is not in the city,
I seem to be away
In a village that deep in a valley lies,
Hidden afar among the hills
Whose forest fringes round it rise
And down whose sides the rills
To the winding river stray.

It is evening there in the valley
To which my memories roam :
I cannot hear the hammers ring
In the smithy by the river side ;
The rasping scythes have ceased to swing ;
No more the churn is plied ;
The lowing cows are home.

The quiet soul of summer
Is brooding in the air :
I hear the chiding crickets call :

The sounds that grow from silence swell
In cadences that rise and fall,
And, over hill and dell,
Pours the same moonlight fair.

O well-remembered valley!
O village of my youth!
I long for all the sunny peace
That brooded o'er my earlier day.
I would my weary work might cease,
And that rest, far away,
Be mine again, in truth.

WEARINESS.

The very hardest steel will bend;
The longest day will have an end;
The darkest sky some light will send
Upon our way;
I wait the bending of my fate;
I chide the hours that lag so late;
I watch the heavens with eyes that hate
This long delay.

They say earth's good time comes again;
That joy betides the saddest men;
The deepest cell has gates; but then
Whene'er to me

The good time seems approaching nigh,
Joy's golden cup is carried by,
The gates of iron close, and I
Not yet am free.

I toil my task with patient hands;
I wander over weary lands;
My worn feet sink in shifting sands,
And, evermore,
My task lies useless at my feet,
And when, by happy homes, I meet
Bright forms that should the pilgrim greet,
They close the door.

O weary day, that will not end!
O stubborn steel that will not bend!
O gloomy sky that will not lend
One golden ray!
I would my thorny way were past,
That I upon some couch might cast
My toil-worn limbs, and find at last
What rest I may!

BY AND BY.

From my labors vain and humbling—
Worn and sore—
From the path where I am stumbling
Evermore:

From the sound of bitter jesting
And the scorn ;
From the trouble—sad, unresting,
Bruised, forlorn—

From the shadows I walk under,
And the grief,
I have turned to-night, in wonder
And relief,

To a truth that has not perished,
Though forgot,
And that whether lost or cherished
Changes not.

For I know that all my sinning,
Fault, and fall,
Are but life's weak, faint beginning,
After all.

In the ground the good seed, sleeping,
Seems to die,
But our faith must wait the reaping
By and by.

While my weary days grow longer
This thought cheers :
I shall older grow and stronger
With my years,

And, let them be pain or pleasure
As they fly,
I shall reach my manhood's measure
By and by.

THE WRITERS.

Though I have waded on, for weary years,
Through a thick darkness, and though even now
The clouds above me heavy seem with tears,
And all my pride of strength is forced to bow,

Yet with deep gratitude my full heart swells,
Forgetful of the shadows where I stand,
While memory talks with me, and fondly tells
Of all the friends who lent a helping hand.

So good they were, so kind—God bless them all!
Love without asking, kindness never sought,
They came to me without my beck or call,
Nor can I tell the friendliness they brought;

And yet, among them all, the kindest, best,
Came without knowing me nor saw my face,
Nor less I deem their good deeds manifest,
But thank them for my share in all their grace.

These were the deathless ones who spoke in books,
Whose words of love went out to all the earth
As free as water flows in ebbing brooks,
And made mankind the sharers of their worth.

Ye glorious penmen, poets, brothers all,
It was for this ye labored ; I am one
Of many who have felt your bounty fall
Upon their hearts, and when their work was done

Knew that the prize of all belonged to you,
Through whom God's help came in the needy hour
In words that ye had winged, so strong and true,
And yours the glory be, for yours the power.

GOD'S TOILERS.

I sat on the rock by the sea-shore,
With thoughts as the ocean free,
Watching the light's broad pathway
Far out on the rippling sea.

Far, far away o'er the water
And into the setting sun,
The little waves carried the glory,
Lifting it one by one,

And forms of light and of beauty
  Seemed on it to come and go,
With white feet treading the little waves
  That disappeared in the glow.

But I thought of another pathway,
  The way of the will of God,
Down which, for ages and ages,
  His angels of light have trod.

And I thought of the lives that have borne it,
  As it fell on them, one by one,
Each willing to lift and to vanish
  When their labor for Him was done.

And I thought, perhaps, like the billows,
  Both glory and toil they bore ;
And that when all the labor was over
  They might carry the light evermore.

To our eyes the billows have perished—
  And the lives of His saints are concealed ;
But they're hidden with God in the heaven
  The light on that pathway revealed.

THE GOLDEN STREET.

The toil is long and I am very tired;
O Father, I am weary of the way!
Give me that rest I have so long desired;
Bring me that Sabbath's fair, refreshing day,
And let the fever of my world-worn feet
Press the cool smoothness of the golden street.

Tired—very tired! And I at times have seen,
When the far, pearly gates were open thrown
For those who walked no more with me, the green,
Sweet foliage of the trees which there alone
At last wave over those whose world-worn feet
Press the cool smoothness of the golden street.

When the gates open, and before they close—
Sad hours but holy—I have watched the tide
Whose living crystal there forever flows
Before the Throne, and I have sighed and sighed
To think how long until my world-worn feet
Press the cool smoothness of the golden street.

They shall not wander from that blessed way:
Nor heat, nor cold, nor weariness, nor sin,
Nor any clouds in that eternal day,
Trouble them more who once have entered in,
But all is rest to them whose world-worn feet
Press the cool smoothness of the golden street.

Then the gates close and I behold no more;
Though, as I walk, they open oftener now
For those who leave me and go on before,
And I am lonely, also, while I bow,
And think of those dear souls whose world-worn feet
Press the cool smoothness of the golden street.

Tired—very tired! But I will patient be,
Nor will I murmur at the weary way;
I too shall walk beside the crystal sea,
And pluck the ripe fruit all that God-lit day,
When Thou, O Lord, shalt let my world-worn feet
Press the cool smoothness of the golden street.

THE PARABLE OF THE WRECKS.

On a desolate, storm-beaten island,
A mariner watched the sea
That aye, with a dull and sullen plash
Fretted the shore in a ceaseless dash,
Murmuring mournfully;

And ever the mocking water
Tossed bits of wrecks on the land;
Tangled cordage and planks and spars
And timbers, dinted with storm-given scars,
Lay scattered along the strand.

They were memories, they, of the ocean—
All that the grim sea keeps—
Stories of many a bitter strife ;
Tales of the fathomless death-in-life
That under its bosom sleeps.

With a listless and weary footstep
The mariner paced his way,
And the relics of ruins seem to scan
With the eye of a lost and shipwrecked man—
More of a wreck than they.

But there came a wind o'er the water—
A wind that seemed to speak—
And every murmuring, mocking wave,
Unto the mind an echo gave,
And a flush rose into his cheek,

And the human wreck went to the others,
The waifs of wind and wave,
And unto the toys of storms and gales,
The planks and spars and tattered sails,
His hands a new form gave.

On the shore of the desolate island,
With the rocks on either side,
The form of a vessel, strong and new,
Out of the fragments slowly grew
Till he launched it forth on the tide.

And the rough waves mocked no longer,
But, one bright sunny day,
He left the lonely and wreck-strewn sand,
Steering his bark with a master hand
For a fair land far away.

LATER VERSES.

LATER VERSES.

GETHSEMANE.

I read how, in Gethsemane,
The suffering Saviour bowed the knee :
  My tears fall fast upon the book—
    It was so grandly sad to read
    Of Him in darkness, grief and need !
  It seemed to me that I could look
Through all thy shades, Gethsemane,
And see the One who died for me.

I too had my Gethsemane :
The hour of darkness came to me
  And none was by to watch or aid :
    In grief and fear I drank, alas,
    The bitter cup that would not pass :
  Then like my Lord I knelt and prayed
And in my own Gethsemane
I found the One who died for me.

THE SAXON KING.

I am dreaming of the old-time fray,
In the bloody field by the sea,
When Norman William won, and when
King Harold and the Saxon men
Fought all the livelong day and then
Died bravely and died free.

The foreigners, the story goes,
Outnumbered three to one,
And forest-like the lances brown
Upon King Harold's men bore down
And lost were England's hope and crown
When that day's fight was done.

Beneath the Saxon standard tall
The last true Saxon died,
And not one man of that array
Of freemen threw his sword away,
In life they stood, in death they lay,
By English Harold's side.

The Hastings death gripe still is held
'Neath God's unsinking sun,
And hireling steel and three-fold might
And pride of caste, with Saxon right
Keep up to-day the same stern fight—
Though Norman William won.

In all the poor man's upward strife,—
Though daily beaten sore—
I see the Saxons keep the plain
Till good King Harold comes again
To wear and guard, but not in vain,
The freeman's crown he wore.

So, day by day, the Norman's pride
Reels backward towards the sea,
And we, who, had we been there then,
Had surely stood with Harold's men,
Will follow now with sword or pen
Whene'er he leads the free.

THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION.

O'er a hard path, from which was no evasion,
Self-scourged, self-driven, he fled,
While all the Valley of Humiliation
Before his flight lay spread:

Around him, low, he heard the sad winds calling,
While ghost-like, shadowy birds
Made voices, answering through the dead leaves falling,
Sadder than any words.

All the long night he trode that vale of sorrow
With bleeding, weary feet,
Nor had he faith to think that any morrow
A brighter dawn might greet.

Still girded he his spirit up for toiling
As if it had been day,
Nor deemed his soul forever might be soiling
With mire of that dark way.

To him, at last, a morning lifted slowly
Above the hills afar:
Pale was the light, and yet it seemed most holy
Though all the mists did mar.

He stands, to-day, beyond the gloomy valley,
Its darkness and its blight,
And round his way bright hope and promise rally,
And all the birds of light;

The path before him laughs with bright-eyed flowers;
The grass is fresh and green,
And all the future builds him vine-clad bowers,
While fountains dance between:

Still he must mourn his night of degradation,
Nor can he deem it passed
While yet the mire of that humiliation
Is on his garments cast.

He cannot cleanse them, though he wash forever!
How shall he take the stain
From those white robes of soul? Ah, shall they never
Unspotted be, again?

Find him, O Life, some fountain, pure and flowing,
By whose cool, blessed side,
Faith's palms of triumph evermore are growing,
And in whose purging tide

His soul may watch the sad strains disappearing,
And let no future know
The dark night's history, but walk unfearing
That shame of long ago.

WEDDED.

They two, knee-deep in the flowers of the valley, gazing
Up the long and winding way,
That lost itself in the mist and distance hazing
With golden gray

The far-off summits where the valley ended,
And from whose clouded crown
The city with whose walls the hill-tops blended
Shone dimly down.

"The grass is green," they said, "and bright the flowers,
And stately are the trees,
And very cool and pleasant are the bowers
That seem for ease,

"And we would love them all, if we knew whether
This fair and wondrous way
Is one that we may journey in together,
Nor go astray,

"Nor lose each other, while we walk or dally
With light and fruit and bloom,
For we have heard that they who pass this valley
Find vales of gloom

"Where evil shades all light and beauty smother,
And sin and harm are there,
And we would neither wish to lead the other
Such ways to share.

"There, too, they say, we cannot see the city
That shines upon the hill—"
And each then looked on each, in love and pity
For so much ill.

The yellow sunlight fell in glory o'er them,
And, as they onward stepped,
It seemed that none in that fair vale before them
Could e'er have wept.

Hopeful and timid both, yet closer clasping
Each other as they went—
Less thoughtful of the flowers than of that grasping—
With young eyes bent

Less on the bowers, of so much beauty blended,
Or on the hill-tops gray,
Than on the city where all met and ended,
So far away.

Still, as they went, they kissed and wondered whether—
In low, sweet, loving talk—
They two should one day terminate together
Their long, fair walk;

And oft the narrow, winding way was sundered
Beneath their very feet,
But, ere two paths they knew, again they wondered
To see them meet

And blend once more, as they had parted never—
Then kissed they o'er and o'er,
And said that so they could walk on forever,
And part no more.

A BALLAD OF EASTER MONDAY.

After walking with the German Peace Jubilee procession, April 16th, 1871.

The pride of the Great Republic,
  She waits by the shore of the sea,
Ready to welcome the outland men
  To the land where all are free,

And with them they bring to her bosom
  The banners of all the world,
But the bountiful city knows full well
  That the dear flags are only furled.

Now, had all the world in the city
  On that Easter Monday been,
They had seen her swarming thoroughfares
  Choked up with German men.

As sobs and laughter will choke one
  And make him slow to speak,
That he steadies his voice and coaxes back
  The color into his cheek,

Till the pride and the joy are mastered
  And the man is himself again—
And the city seemed to lift its hat
  And wait for the German men.

'Twas a goodly and human sympathy,
Such as only great hearts know,
And our beautiful city was dearer to us
For treating the Germans so.

Down the avenues and the Bowery,
And around by the City Hall,
And up through the splendor of Broadway,
By many a windowed wall,

Dense banks were the walks, o'er-leaning
The street-flood of flags and steel,
The strong, full torrent of marching men,
And the city seemed to feel

That the thing they did was a mighty
And a worthy thing to do,
To show that, through distance and long time,
The German heart was true.

'Twas a wonderful thing and a mighty,
The river that flowed that day,
From its far-away German fountains
Through that channel in Broadway :

'Twas a choke of sobs and laughter ;
It was good to see and grand—
'Twas not for the Kaiser's conquering sword
But the ransomed father-land.

Ransomed? Why, yes—they felt it:
United and so redeemed—
And under the golden April day
They marched like men who dreamed.

They shouted? Of course, but the cheering
Had a smothered and thoughtful tone,
As a disinherited heir might have
On coming back to his own.

So the great and wonderful freshet
Flowed on in its channel free—
The overflow of the German heart
Through our city by the sea.

THE CHILDREN'S WELCOME.

Written for the little people of the Sunday-school, Christmas Eve.

The children welcomed the Master,
On His way to Jerusalem;
He was their heavenly Pastor,
And He came to gather them!

With branches of palms and singing
They crowded around His way,
Each young heart joyfully bringing
Its hymn to the Lord that day.

They were His lambs, He told them,
In words that are still so sweet,
And He in His arms would fold them
If they only came round His feet.

You are our earthly pastor,
While we are as small as they
Who sung round the path of the Master,
And as likely to go astray.

You are His disciple and servant,
And so we will welcome you
With young hearts, loving and fervent,
And glad words, simple and true.

Gather us all, if you can, sir,
Each little wandering lamb ;
Teach us, like Samuel, to answer
"You called me and here I am."

We think we will try and hear you,
If you call to us clear and plain,
And we'll come around very near you
And listen again and again.

Tell us of all His pity
And His love, so full and free,
And the beautiful, bright, new city
Where we all may one day be.

We will all look up and listen
As the children did, that day,
Till we see Jerusalem glisten
On the great hill, far away.

YEAST.

He knew the kingdom of heaven, who told
Of the woman who, amid
The depths of her sifted measures three,
The "little leaven" hid.

The whole was leavened, in time, He said,
But left it for human eyes
To seek in the symbol's inner thought
For the truth therein that lies.

Has it entered our hearts that o'er all the earth,
Ground fine in woe or weal,
Are scattered the heaps which God has piled,
These heaps of human meal?

Three measures in every mystic pile,
If we know to measure well,
And the leaven of heaven is there, and so
Is a yeast that was brewed in hell.

This heap of ours, 'neath the western sun,
That has cost so much to raise,
Has its treble measures, wisely told,
Though we mete it in many ways.

The seed of one grew on this field,
And of one came o'er the seas,
And an African plant the third one bore,
And they mingle by slow degrees.

American, African, Europe born,
Trebly the measures heap,—
Ground fine — pressed closer while we wake,
And increasing while we sleep.

Shall we make thereof the holy bread
For the temple of God in heaven?
Shall the kingdom come and the Will be done?
God give us a purer leaven!

The meal is here, the kingdom grows,
The leaven is working fast—
Thank God, to think that such a heap
Shall all be Bread at last!

TO THE REV. MR. ——

Matthew v. 1.

Thou sayest thou hast seen this multitude—
  Even such thy Master saw, in Galilee—
And heard their cry for spiritual food—
  Even so He heard, by that far Syrian sea.

As Christ did, so do thou, for this fair town ;
  As thou hast read—for He is speaking still—
Go up into the mountain, sit thee down,
  Open thy mouth and tell them all His will

Speak all the truth ! If thou refrain to tell
  One word of Christ's deep counsel, if thou hide
Aught He has bid thee utter, it were well
  To hide thee, first, beneath the Atlantic tide.

Go up into the mountain ! Only there
  Shalt thou receive, as Moses did, His word—
On that perpetual height in whose pure air
  His message by thy spirit can be heard.

Not on the plain, where all these others speak,
  And Scribes and Pharisees so long have taught,
And still the hungry crowds are faint and weak—
  Go up into the mountain of God's thought !

Go up into the mountain; thence look down
  On all things wordly, counting them but dross
So thou but win, with Him, the Preacher's crown—
  He, from each mountain-top, could see His cross!

Whether thy mountain shall be found, for thee,
  Pulpit or altar, let thy willing feet
Follow thy Lord's. Go up, for it may be
  That on the summit thou thy Lord shalt meet.

RESET.

In settings worn and old a gem may sleep,
And all obscured its inner radiance keep,
  When, if but polished free
  Of dim antiquity,
And but the graver's edge pass lightly o'er
The battered carving, it will shine once more.

And such, perhaps, the legend weird and old
Still by the Danube's turbulent water told,
  Of how, one bitter day,
  In numberless array,
The turbaned warriors darkened all the plain,
And even the Cross seemed lifted up in vain.

German and Magyar, Greek and Pole were there,
Brave, less in faith or hope than with despair,

They seemed so few to bide
The sweep of that fierce tide.
All Europe lay behind them, fair and free,
But shadowed by the dread of what might be.

They heard the Turkish cymbals and the cry
Of Poland's trumpet, calling them to die,
And in the bloody close
They grappled with their foes
As men will struggle in the dark with death,
Knowing their doom yet gasping hard for breath.

Then, in the van of that fast-falling few,
Some unseen lips an unseen clarion blew,
And o'er the hopeless fray
Was lifted up to slay
A sword of unknown fashion, bright and keen,
Such as, till then, no warrior's eye had seen.

Behind that blade arose no knightly crest;
Its blazing hilt no steel-clad fingers pressed;
But under it the plain
Was heaped with Moslem slain,
And far beyond the foremost Christian rank
In rout and blood its flashings rose and sank.

Forward the Cross! The doubt and fear were o'er;
Mad, blinded, stricken, wading deep in gore,

And stumbling o'er their dead,
The hosts of Islam fled,
While, like God's angel following the banned,
Above them gleamed the sword without a hand.

Such is the legend ; such the antique gem
Worthy to shine in this day's diadem ;
For, as God's years renew,
The tale again is true ;
And while to-day our Christian hosts abide
A strife like that by the old Danube's tide,

Beyond our deepest work, our truest thought,
Beyond what human faith or love has wrought,
There cleaves and thrusts a sword
That battles for the Lord—
We need but follow in the open way,
Where, ere we come, His Word has won the day.

A PARABLE OF THE KINGDOM.

The world rolled on the same, yet not the same ;
For now the age of night and strife had passed,
And from the East the dawning glory came
Of God's new day ; dim, broken, forward cast
Among the shadows, but the day at last.

Men questioned still if 'twere indeed the Sun
Whose faint light deepened o'er the Kingdom fair,
So long in doubt and now so strangely won,
And through the morning walked the Christ, the Heir,
Ere yet His brethren knew that He was there.

In one dim valley, where the ancient gloom
But slowly yielded to the conquering ray,
Rose what seemed half a temple, half a tomb —
Either might beauty wear in that new day —
And he who built stood by it in the way.

"Who art thou?" asked the King, "and what is here?
What record of the dead should now remain?"
Said he, "The Heir has come; His day is near,
And half it seems like morning. Not again
Shall night return, or weariness, or chain.

"And I, being risen, am wearing my new name,
Whose wondrous music tells my quickened sense
That I am Work, His angel. Once, with shame
And rags and hunger for sad recompense,
I delved the dull fields that have vanished hence,

"And then my name was Toil, and I a slave.
So now, to bless the memory of this thing,
I build this marble shrine above the grave
Of that which rose not with me, thus to bring
The glory of my freedom to the King."

No answer made the Heir, but bowed and passed,
And all the valley flushed and glowed with light
Of that warm smile which He behind him cast,
And Work forgot there ever had been night,
The tomb of Toil shone out so heavenly bright.

A RIDDLE OF LIFE.

I bring no dark complaint of life,
I feel no discontent,
But would I knew what all the strife
And all the trouble meant.

The toil I think I understand,
And victory comes of pain!
The plough must tear the fertile land,
And clouds must break in rain!

I would not rob our trial time
Of aught that gives it worth;
And only agony can climb
The heaven-lit hills of earth.

But why, with so much ill to fight
And such rewards to win,
We grapple blindly, in the night,
With men instead of sin.

Why we should spend our little strength,
Our sacred suffering waste,
Only to find how vain, at length,
Our folly's frenzied haste,

This I have failed to make my own,
Or read the riddle well,
Albeit I stumble o'er the stone
Where all my brethren fell.

Men, women—to the right and left—
Alike, in this, are all;
We strive, as if of sense bereft,
When Peace is at our call.

'Tis strange! I would the world were sane
And strove but with its foes,
Redeeming use of all its pain
To compensate its woes:

There would be no dark riddle, then,
But, clearly understood,
The Garden and the Cross of men
Lead to Eternal Good.

THE CAPTAIN'S MEN.

"Whom shall the Captain rely on,
In this long and desperate fight?"
The heroes, in their places,
Who stand with earnest faces
Set like a flint toward Zion—
These may the Captain rely on,
In the long war for the right.

"But whom shall the Captain rely on,
In this long and wearying fight?"
The meek ones, in their places,
With upturned, suffering faces,
Still marble-firm toward Zion—
These may the Captain rely on,
In the weary war for the right.

"Ah, whom shall the Captain rely on,
In this long and wavering fight?"
The sinners, in their places,
With sad, repentant faces
Turned weepingly toward Zion—
Even these may the Captain rely on,
In the wavering war for the right.

"Whom, whom shall the Captain rely on,
In this hard and life-long fight?"
Those only, in their places,
Whose true hearts keep their faces

Set night and day toward Zion—
These shall the Captain rely on,
When he leads his host for the right.

THE TRUMPET-CALL.

Wounded in many a combat
And scarred from head to heel,
War-worn and weak and weary,
Through the smoke of battle, dreary,
He heard a trumpet peal.

The sound, for he surely heard it,
Seemed right above his head;
It was louder, far, than the wailing,
And it thrilled him, fainting and failing,
With the voice of what it said.

It was as if some angel
Had sounded it, silver sweet,
With a breath he had drawn in heaven—
"Forward! To you 'tis given,
That you shall not know defeat.

"Forward! Forever forward!
Though the fight be long and sore,
Thou shalt go on forever,
In brave and strong endeavor,
And conquer, evermore."

He listened well to the trumpet,
And a new life filled his breast:
He thought of his scars no longer,
But out of his wounds grew stronger,
And found in the strife a rest.

And now, through each day's battle,
Wherever his steps are led,
Whenever his heart is weary,
He will pause and hark for the cheery
Trumpet-call overhead.

UNANSWERED.

In bitterness of heart
I kneel before him,
Nor will my grief depart
While I adore him.

My spirit groans with pain
Of many bruises,
Whose cure I beg in vain,
For He refuses.

Yet from my trembling faith
One hope I borrow,
That lightens many a scathe
And softens sorrow.

His hand has sent me all
  My searching trials :
From His own kind lips fall
  These stern denials.

I bow before His will,
  As I am bidden—
In the refusal still
  The gift is hidden.

His sight, than my blind eyes
  More penetrating,
Knows why 'tis right and wise
  To keep me waiting.

I think I hear His voice
  In kind assurance
Bidding my heart rejoice
  In its endurance:

And, though He now deny
  My heart's petition,
I shall have, by and by,
  Its full fruition.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

What is love, my darling?
  "It is bliss—
'Tis the life of Heaven
    Entering this."

Still, what is love, darling?
"It is peace—
God has given us its
Sweet release."

Ah, what is love, darling?
"It is hope,
And the future's portals
It can ope."

Is love more, my darling?
"It is power,
Lord of every trouble
Of the hour."

Something more, my darling?
"Faith and trust—
God will give it only
To the just."

Is that all, my darling?
"Love is truth,
And it lives forever
In its youth."

Something more, my darling,
All above?
"Yes, it is Emmanuel—
God is love!"

NAMES.

The people good and loving,
  Who, in my early days,
Sought by their wise reproving
  To fashion well my ways,

Tried hard to teach me terror
  Of all my many blames,
But deemed my saddest error
  The trick of calling names.

But stronger yet and stronger
  It comes upon me still—
I can keep mum no longer,
  And call you names I will!

My pet, my love, my darling,
  My sunshine, my delight;
My heart you are ensnarling,
  And do you think it's right?

My pearl, my dear, my blessing,
  My heart's-ease, and my sweet;
My soul, it's all confessing,
  Is falling at your feet.

My hope, my joy, my glory,
  My rose of all the earth—
And this is all the story,
  And we know what it's worth.

THE PARABLE OF THE MINE.

A servant of the Master of the mine,
One of the working ones who toil for love,
Brought Him, one day, a shapeless mass of ore
Which he had found among the grimy lanes
That pierce the darkness of the under-world,
Rough, rugged, earthy, bearing with it still
Something of darkness and the obscure mine.

"What shall I do with this, O Master? I
Can find upon it not a trace of gold,
And wherefore lay it, then, within the vein?
Or shall I straightway go and cast it forth?"

"Not so," replied the Master. "Wash it first."

And so a crystal tide was o'er it poured,
And all the grimy earth was cleansed away,
But still no gold appeared. The flinty mass
Showed here and there a glimmering face of white,
And smooth quartz crystals glittered in the sun,
But vainly did the washer watch for gold.

"O Master, it is worthless; nor can I
Tell how it came to fall within the vein."

"Nay," said the Master, "it is only washed;
Thou hast but made the outside somewhat clean.
Go, put it in the mill and crush it fine!"

So said, so done. The heavy hammers fell,
And all the rock was broken fine as sand.
The stubborn-hearted crystals of the quartz
Yielded their glittering edges, one by one,
And with them crumbled all the meaner stone.

"O Master, as thou badest me I have done,
And I have made it but a heap of dust
Wherein I cannot see a sign of gold.
How came such worthless ore within the vein?"

"O thou of little faith," the Master said,
"Put now thy sand within the crucible,
And round it gather all thy hottest coals.
The hammer findeth little, but the fire
Which I will bid thee kindle may do more."

Then round the crucible the flames arose
With terrible heat, such as the eastern king
Whitened his furnace with for that brave three
Who feared their God more than they did the fire.
Fetid, and foul, and dark the smoke arose
Above the trial pit, and all within
The blackening mass of dross seethed up and down,
To be with skilful hand skimmed lightly off
And cast away. At last the work was done,
And from the crucible the servant poured
A shining tide of metal in the mould,

Which, with a doubtful hand, he had prepared.
Then, when it cooled, an ingot fair and large,
Came forth to answer what was in the heart
Of that which he had digged up from the mine;
Yet still he saw that something more than gold,
Some baser metal, foreign and impure,
Debased the ingot, tainting all its worth.

"O Master, it is done as Thou hast said,
And even now the gold is vile and mean,
Unfit at all to be sent forth as Thine."

"Peace," said the Master. "In my own good time,
This ingot will be taken far away
Where my refiners work, within the mint,
And they shall leave it nothing but pure gold,
And stamp thereon the name that I shall give,
And evermore it shall be known as mine."

Then cried the servant, full of loving joy—
"O Master, I will henceforth bring Thee all
That I may find within the precious vein,
However dark and deep the lanes may run
Through all the hard and worthless under-world,
And hope that Thou wilt find Thy gold in all,
With water, and the hammers, and the fire."

BENISON.

Now may the sunshine from the skies,
And warmer love-light from my heart,
Find you, where'er your pathway lies,
To follow and become a part
Of all your day ; and when it flies,

Though all the sunlight sinks away
To sleep behind the shadowy west,
And evening settles, cold and gray,
Still may the heart-light—which is best—
Forever with you kindly stay.

Still may your spirit clearly see,
Through all the darkness earth may cast
Upon the varying time to be,
My love still brightening, to the last,
And making day for you and me.

The days of earth will come and go,
And over each the night must creep
With shadowy dimness, cold and slow,
But through them all our hearts may keep
The better light whose holy glow

Comes to us, clear and chastened, through
Tall temple-windows, high and pure,
From fires which burn on altars true—
By shrines that evermore endure,
Through all things old and all things new.

MY LITTLE GIRL.

Every day I am sure to meet
As I go my way—in the crowded street,
  In the grassy parks, or the haunts of trade—
  The womanly beauty that God has made,
In forms that might quicken the heart of a churl—
But there's none of them all like my little girl !

I love to look at their faces fair,
Their sparkling eyes and their flowing hair,
  The lips which even in silence speak
  And the blushes that fain, in each soft cheek,
Would the very banner of love unfurl—
But there's none of them all like my little girl !

I love to watch as they trip along,
Gracefully threading the busy throng,
  Daintily touching the stony street
  With the light caress of their little feet,
How the wind will toy with tress and curl—
But there's none of them all like my little girl !

Fluttering raiment of many a dye
Brushes me soft as I pass them by ;
  Garments woven with cunning care,
  To make the fairest appear more fair,
With jewels of gold, and jewels of pearl—
But there's none of them all like my little girl !

Sweet is the beauty which God has made,
And well it is it should be arrayed
  In jewels rare as rare may be,
  And robes that flow like the rippling sea,
And tresses braided with witchery's twirl—
But there's none of them all like my little girl!

Ah, truth, while the multitude flashes by,
I catch a glance of a laughing eye,
  A merry lip and a loving smile
  That remaineth beside me all the while,
For they bid me to think of my jewel, my pearl,
My blessing—the warm heart of my little girl!

BE AT THE WINDOW.

The weary week is over,
  My feet no more shall roam—
Wait for me at the window,
  For I am coming home!

Wait for me at the window,
  That I may see your face
Light up to meet my coming,
  To seek my resting place.

Be at the window, darling,
  When I come up the street:
Be peeping through the curtains—
  Be waiting for me, sweet!

I would to you look upward,
As in all things above
My poor and small deservings—
Too high for aught but love.

I'll think that I am climbing ;
That, on some upper floor
Of life and love and duty,
You'll mine be, evermore.

So, now the week is over,
And I no more may roam,
Be at the window, darling,
To smile when I come home.

CHRISTMAS MORNING, 1870.

With the New Clock.

The Christmas morn has brightened up
O'er all the winter land,
And God, our Light, is scattering gifts
With free and loving hand :

With love and hope our hearts are warm
As in sweet days gone by,
And bright, before our trusting hearts,
His lands of promise lie.

Each warm pulsation, since I waked,
Has only been for you ;
And all my manhood overflows,
With impulse strong and true.

More has He given to her and me
Than we can grasp or know :
Her hands and mine too narrow are
For what He can bestow :

And yet, on this dear day of all
The liberal hearts and free,
I would her blessing, in some part,
Should seem to come from me.

I cannot give her gold, or gems,
The wonderful, or rare,
Though nothing that my thought can seek
Appears too rich or fair :

Myself? She had me long ago,
My very heart, my life,
Nor can I find in all my soul
More love to bring my wife,

And yet some token I must bring
To mark, in some slight way,
The nevermore forgotten light
Of our first Christmas day—

One small, poor token, only one—
A dumb thing, yet that speaks
And has a message of its own,
For hours and days and weeks,

Aye, and for months and years as well;
A voice from silence brought;
The still expression of its face;
One ever-rising thought.

Upon it we may look to see,
How love and time march by,
And how the past and future meet
To see the present die:

Its plodding patience shall rebuke
Each throbbing pulse of haste,
Its close economy reprove
Each deed of careless waste:

Its unrepining solitude
Shall bid us meekly bear
The troubles that may reach our home
Which we together share.

O, may it measure only love
Beneath its tireless feet,
And be each hour it ticks away,
More dearly, purely sweet!

I cannot give her jewels rare,
Nor gifts of gems and gold,
But offer, with this clock, the prayer
"Our love may ne'er grow old!"

Love, ever fresh and young and strong,
Light lift our load of cares,
And love's warm heart-beats yet "mark time,"
Beneath our whitening hairs.

Our time—God's time—our life and love,
Shall glide together on,
And yet shall neither find an end,
When this gift's work is done.

THE ISLE OF YEW.

It may not be otherwise, darling,
For this chart of our life is true,
And every ship that floateth,
Must touch at the Isle of Yew.

We shall land and bow in the shadow
That only the yew-tree throws,
On that sad and desolate island
Where only the yew-tree grows.

I know not when we shall reach it,
In a stormy day, or fair,
Or what of our precious cargo
We shall under the yew-tree bear—

"Certain?" Yes, darling, certain,
For this chart of our life is true,
And whoso has said "I love you"
Has sailed for the Isle of Yew.

WORD PICTURES.

The mountain will not be crushed to fit my verses:
I cannot cramp the prairie into a line:
No frenzy vies with a storm to howl forth curses:
The sunset will not yield its gold divine:

The rise and fall of the sea throbs out of measure:
The cataract roars one deaf to spoken words:
The falling rain will not bring me its treasure:
I have no voice to tell the flight of birds:

The very beatings of my heart escape me
Whenever I would send them through my pen—
All things—so I abandon all and shape me
My numbers, rather, from the needs of men.

ON A WEDDING-DAY.

A great, warm-hearted prophet,
The kindly summer sun
Smiled in, to light the faces
Of which I saw but one.

Oh yes, I heard the minister,
But, in that hour and place,
Thought, will, and life were centred
Upon one girlish face.

One face, with a sweet, strong meaning,
That was uttered in one sweet word,
And I think that day in summer
No other sound I heard.

For in my heart there was silence,
Holy and hushed and still,
So, darling, for ever and ever,
I might hear you say "I will."

And He who bears record heard it,
And its deep, dear meaning knew
Better than you or I did,
And His grace has made it true.

Ah, darling, that God should listen
To words our lips could speak,
And give His own strong sanction
To vows that seemed so weak.

From her old-time friends and kindred,
Out under the prophet sun,
Who had smiled through the curtained window,
Did I lead the wife I'd won.

And the days have set and risen,
Till three long, wondrous years
Have so o'erflowed with mercies,
There's been no room for tears.

Aye, truly, there have been winters—
Not all sweet flowers and light—
But to-day, as I look back o'er them,
No shadows are in sight.

The winters have left no snowdrifts,
For they all have melted away
In the love whose sunshine brightens
Again for our wedding-day.

Dream of it with me, darling;
Think of our long, sweet peace;
Let our hearts drink in His promise
That love shall never cease.

All things of earth shall perish,
The heaven shall pass away,
The winter shall follow the summer,
But the bloom of love shall stay.

Sweet day, dear! Think of our children,
Our beautiful girl and boy,
Whom we are to rear for heaven
And the everlasting joy.

There will be two more angels
To stand before the throne,
Because of the love He gave us,
And they both will be our own.

O darling, these thoughts of our wedding
Grow into a dream of palms,
And happy folk in white garments,
And the music of harps and psalms.

Surely the sun was a prophet
That heard you say "I will,"
And the smile of that benediction
Brightens our pathway still.

Blessing and mercy only
Have crowded our home since then;
Ah, these are our friends and kindred,
And our wedding has come again.

THE LESSON.

Now I have seen the shining of His face
  This side the far shore of the crystal sea ;
He has looked in upon my earthly place,
  And thus it was He came so near to me.

My little daughter, not two years from Him,
  For whose dear life I seek to be His wall,
Was perched, half-frightened, on a tree's low limb,
  And murmured, " Papa will not let her fall."

That only, but my heart and eyes ran o'er,
  For I too, with my weak hands, grasp and cling
Where He has placed me, trembling, evermore,
  Lest tree or limb should break, or some such thing.

This, then, my darling taught me : by her hand
  Outreached, as if my own were far away
And not close by her, where I could but stand,
  And more by that soft word I heard her say—

The branch to which He lifts me is full strong
  To bear my weight ; He hears my faintest call ;
His watchful love clasps round me all day long ;
  My heavenly Father will not let me fall !

GOOD WORDS.

Beyond all doubt the men of heaven tell
  One to another, in their joy o'erflowing,
Sweet things of Him who loves them all so well,
  And how His kingdom here on earth is growing.

Above the golden street no doubt-clouds frown,
  No storms of passion through the life-trees shiver,
And those white-robed ones, glad with palm and crown,
  Must needs talk wondrous things, there, by the river.

So too, if earth indeed contains fair souls,
  As heavenly good as men have sung or or painted,
Whose faultless life a perfect will controls,
  Already pure, before their Judgment sainted,

Their every breath must bear somewhat of praise,
  And each to each must often tell the story
Of Jesus Christ, and how the coming days
  Shall find the whole earth radiant with His glory.

But not, I sometimes think, by that bright throng,
  Though theirs is bliss eternal and unmeasured,
Nor by white saints on earth—safe, pure, and strong,
  Can some of Christ's good words be fondest treasured.

Those have, already, God's unclouded day ;
These almost see the open-gated city ;
But unto us blind souls who go astray
Comes He with sweeter music of His pity.

Upon our ears His words of promise fall,
Among the dark paths where our torn feet stumble—
Lost sheep, who can but faintly hear, at all—
"Forgiven most,"—He said that for the humble—

"They most shall love:" and that unmeasured gain,
And faith, love's bridegroom, to our utter weakness,
Shall bring sweet cure of evil and of pain,
Though scarce we touch His robes in trembling weakness.

"It was to save the lost," He said, "I came."
Our Gospel, full of joy—and we, replying
From glad though broken hearts, the promise claim,
For, Lord, not they but, we—we are the dying.

A SONG OF SPANISH GLORY.

November 9th, 1873.

Caught on the sea and shot on the shore.
Santa Maria! There were but four,

And what was that but a mere beginning,
A bite before lunch, or a beggar's winning,
To souls whose hunger clamored for more?

The easiest victory under the sun,
With no disgust of an answering gun:
Steam and speed, an hour's quick sailing,
The rebels, the while, their doom bewailing,
And then Spain's mercy, and all was done.

Caught on the sea and shot on the shore!
'Twas a merchant steamer and nothing more,
And we were true to our ancient glory,
And we added yet a charm to the story
Which Cuba's rebels may shudder o'er.

Glory enough for one golden day,
With blood to follow and no delay
To ruffle our pride o'er the blow we'd stricken,
But we knew how the hearts in the hills would sicken
When they heard how prompt was our Spanish way.

Man or woman, or young or old,
Or shore or sea, while we keep our hold
And Spain's on the ever-faithful island,
Rich plantation and rugged highland,
There'll be dead to count when the tale is told.

Blood has dropped like a tropic rain
O'er the long path worn by the feet of Spain—
  Blood to the lips and the horses' bridles
  By the shrines of Freedom and other idols—
And any color but red were a stain.

THE SPANISH ADJUTANT.

November 12th, 1873.

"Since yesterday morning? How does it run?
I have it—there! Shoot him! Forty-one.
Only a boy, and a sailor too.
Dead? Well, sergeant, hurry it through.

"Count? Of course, but what's the need
When every one of the fools must bleed?
Forty-two. Are there any more?
I was half afraid they would stop at four.

"Forty-three. How his head went down!
Another sailor, from heel to crown.
English, too, from his build and face,
Glad to see one of 'em find his place.

"That one's Irish. No, he won't care
To dance any more at Donnybrook Fair.
Forty-four—they're the worst of men,
But he'll never trouble Spain again.

"Long, lank, steady—as I'm alive
He's a Yankee colonel! Well, forty-five.
Northern, or Southern, who cares now
Where he came to his end, or how?

"Forty-six. That fellow's afraid.
Did you notice the grasp at his heart he made?
A picture? Ah—and the ball went through
The very face of it—spoiled it, too.

"Forty-seven. I'm sure that's right.
Wait till I get my cigar alight—
This will be news that will scare away
These blockade-runners for many a day.

"Cuban or Frenchman? Good! Forty-eight.
Off to the left there! Lay them straight.
They would give our Spanish drill small thanks,
But we've taught them at least to keep their ranks.

"One more, sergeant? Forty-nine?
So, then. Now for a bottle of wine,
And we'll drink to the traitors who cross the sea,
To where Spain is waiting to set them free."

THE SPANISH STATESMAN.

November 13th, 1873.

"I'm glad they took the steamer,
Though the thing's a trifle mixed
By these clumsy laws o' nations—
I must write and have it fixed.

"The best, completest victory
We've won for many a day,
And we've proved our count of prisoners
In the only certain way.

"'Twould have been a precious muddle
Were they not all shot and tried,
But, since that's done and over,
'Tis immensely simplified.

"Of course there'll be some flurry,
And we'll have to smile some lies,
And if it reaches England—
Why, we may apologize.

"No matter for the Yankees,
With their panic and their debt
And their rotten-ribbed old steamers,
They're not half ready yet.

"They'll never dream of acting
Now the men are safe and shot,
And as for correspondence,
I'd as lief have that as not.

"I'm glad they caught the steamer,
'Twas a splendid thing to do;
And I'm glad the danger's over—
But 'twas well to rush it through."

THE AMERICAN STATESMAN.

November 13th, 1873.

"It's a wonderful isle, at our door, out there,
And, if Spain were one bit like Achilles,
I'd say the weak heel of the kingdom fair
Is this Queen of the green Antilles.

"Somewhat disturbed, I should say, just now,
From its usual peace and quiet,
But Spain is too wise to permit a row
To degenerate into a riot.

"No, certainly!—Nothing like war, as yet,
But a good deal of disaffection,
And, unless it be firmly and calmly met,
There is danger of insurrection.

"Letters and telegrams, tons a day!
Poor Spain has enough to disgust her,
With all these rascals from out our way,
In their efforts to filibuster.

"And then, the incredible things they tell—
Rape, murder, robbery, arson—
The Cuba they paint would serve for hell
In the sermons of any parson.

"Another telegram? Papers, too?
'Tis enough to drive one frantic;
And I wish the whole piratical crew,
Were sunk in the blue Atlantic!

"The Virginius taken? The crew shot? So!
Confound that rascally cable!
To think of such work coming, so hot,
When I'd almost cleared my table!

"Let's see; this election:—we were whipped
In a way that was half alarming:—
We must have an ironclad equipped
And say the marines are arming."

AN ISLAND RIDDLE.

November 16th, 1873.

Fair isles in summer seas,
  Rich with all bloom and sweetness;
Soft Edens crowned with ease,
Deep-greened with fruited trees,
  Gems of sea-set completeness:

The calm Pacific laves
  Their coral-girded harbors,
And even our stormier waves
Kneel evermore, like slaves,
  Round their perennial arbors.

Aye, we will grant them fair,
  And yet, for those who win them,
Rank fruits of crime they bear;
Hell's crust seems thinner there,
  And sin grows easier in them.

Grim lusts of horrid food—
  Maori, Carib, Fijian—
Strange hungers, coarse and lewd,
Seem there with power imbued
  To spread their banquet Stygian.

But change of rule and race,
And even the sword's deep draining,
Have wrought a work of grace,
For many an island place
Where old-time ill is waning.

Good change of race and rule!
New life of priests and people!
And poisonous fevers cool
With Bible and with school
And shades of home and steeple,

But where no change is wrought
How shall the scull-feast vanish?
If the new race have brought
Worse blood than that they fought,
And Carib yields to Spanish?

AFTER-TALK OF STEINWAY HALL.

November 19th, 1873.

(Written the evening after the great Cuban meeting.)

Blood? Yes, they've shed it right and left;
Blood of brave men and noble women;
Enough, if poured in one big trough,
For Spain's best iron-clad to swim in;
And good blood still remains, no doubt,
But scarce to fight the battle out.

Brave men there are among the hills,
  Where even diplomacy can't find 'em ;
Pure-hearted men, with patriot wills,
  Though thin the rank and file behind 'em ;
    They were the dawn of Spain's new star,
    Risen earlier than Castelar.

Save these, and, if we took the isle,
  There might be sense in annexation,
But would that thing be worth the while
  And throw in all the population ?
    Before we swallow, it were best
    To think of what we must digest.

Insulted? Wronged ? We're used to that :
  We've stood it from the weakest fellows :
We needn't jump because a hat
  Has dropped among these black-and-yellows ;
    We'd better wait and hear from Spain—
    There's nothing that they can't explain.

It's well to talk in Steinway Hall—
  Great lawyers never are volcanic—
And people crowd to such a call ;
  They almost half forget the panic,
    And love to hear the Navy-yard
    Raise such a hum, when times are hard.

We'll send our flag to sea again—
  One poor ship had it torn from off her—
It's well to float it, now and then,
  For fear some trans-Atlantic scoffer,
    With loss-of-memory in his phiz,
    Should ask us what that bunting is.

Well, on the whole, we'll stick to law :
  It must be right so long's it's written.
The wisest rule you ever saw
  Is " not to bite before you're bitten."
    We've got a good deal on our hands—
    And that's the way the matter stands.

About the blood ? The shooting ? Yes—
  That's where the trouble and disgrace is.
Can crowds, or speeches, or the press,
  Wipe that red spatter from our faces ?
    God grant ! For under every spot
    The flesh it struck is burning hot.

THE SPANISH PEACE PROBLEM.

November 27th, 1873.

The winter morning warms with news of peace,
  And glad are we to shun war's waste and sorrow :
We would this dim dawn might to noon increase,
  With sunny certainties of calm to-morrow,

For us and brave souls dark with doubt and pain,
Waked up in freedom's midnight, there in Spain.

Weary it is to wake in such a night,
Peopled with bloody ghosts that scowl and mutter,
And loom gigantic 'mid the gloom and blight,
To strive against the numbing spells they utter—
Wierd spells of king and priest, of creed and caste,
That were so mighty in the shadowed past.

We would not add a feather to the weight
With which they struggle, and we hold them dearer
Than other men, for hating what we hate,
And this new justice done will bring them nearer—
Provided yet the ghosts are not too strong
To let a Spanish ruler right a wrong.

Oh, sweet is peace and sweet is all good-will!
But this diplomacy's assurance stammers—
Your pardon, Senor, if our best hope still
Speaks in the Navy-yard's reverberent hammers,
And if our faith in Spanish mercy runs
Its careful fingers o'er our count of guns.

"Peace! peace!" We hear the answering statesmen cry—
But is it peace, this truce which we are making?
Do we not stand before the world and lie
To Peace, while Freedom's woe-worn heart is breaking?
If Spain gives back the ship, the unshot men,
Salutes our flag—will peace be solid then?

The curtain rose before our eyes on scenes
Whose horror closed them tight, in quick confession
That some new madman of the Gadarenes,
With all his demons foul in full possession,
Must have been emptied near that brutal throng
Ere they would rush down such great deeps of wrong.

We have been thinking, learning, and we know
Some little of the record whose appalling,
Blood-blotted centuries of shame and woe,
Stirred Cuba's sons against their dark enthralling.
Can peace be built around that island sin
Walled high enough to shut our shudders in?

Pity, 'tis true! Their story tells not, yet,
Of hero-leaders, native born or foreign,
Success has ranked with Lincoln, Lafayette,
Though martyr-memories dear as that of Warren

May wait for history's pen, when all is done
And Cuba's heart seeks out her Washington.

'Tis a great sadness! We are glad to keep
Our mail-clad sea-wolves yet awhile safe muzzled,
But somehow feel the Almighty does not sleep,
And, while our human hearts are sore and puzzled
With love of peace and hate of what is wrong,
The great Avenger still is wise and strong.

THE PREACHER'S PRAYER.

The preacher from his pulpit came, one day,
Spent by vain labor, with a clouded brow,
And, in the small, dark room he sought, to pray,
Groaned deep and cried—although he did not bow
But paced like some caged lion in his den—
"I pray Thee, Father, let me speak to men!"

"I see both Hell and Heaven—all the earth
Lives onward towards their gates, which open here—
And both seem mine, as if their equal worth
Freighted my soul with equal hope and fear,
But both are hidden from these others:—then
I pray Thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"I have lain on my bed at night and dreamed
Of birds that flocking to my window came,
On eager wings that through the shadows gleamed,
Their bright eyes lit with hope as by a flame,—
They would have entered, had it open been—
I pray Thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"On knees of prayer I have shut up mine eyes
Only to see more clearly wandering flocks
Of kids and lambs, unshepherded, unwise,
Scattered through miry vales and on the rocks
Where every were-wolf waited in his den—
I pray Thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"And, when I rose from prayer, or when I waked,
The lambs and kids have come with human sight
In their deep eyes, and all my soul has quaked
To find what birds they were that sought the light
Which drew them to God's window, closed e'en then—
I pray Thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"Oh, Father, I have thought what souls they are;
How long to live; how very long to die;
To what a future, so divinely fair,
Thy love hath called them—now, lo where they lie,
As if they never would rise up again—
I pray Thee, Father, let me speak to men!

" And I have toiled among them, in and out,
Sharing the wondrous trouble of their ways,
And I have felt their darkness and their doubt
Cloud o'er me, wintering thy golden days,
As mist will hide thy sunshine from a fen—
I pray Thee, Father, let me speak to men!

" Each day, my heart throbs urgingly to speak,
And solve earth's mystery for these waiting ears,
And aches to know that it must vainly seek
To make them hearken, 'mid these deafening years,
And all my soul is voiceless. Humbly, then,
I pray Thee, Father, let me speak to men!

" Oh, that I might call in these lambs and kids
From off the rocks and up from all the vales,
And from me tear this something that forbids—
It is not Thee—this something that assails,
And I would have the voice and power of ten.
I pray Thee, Father, let me speak to men!

" This window, where I hold the heavenly light
Which Thou hast given to shine out on earth's hell,
O, let me open wide, and all the night
Shall cloud with wings, if I but call them well,
These birds immortal. Let me open, then!
I pray Thee, Father, let me speak to men!

"O, let me speak! Upon my lips the word
Which I would utter burns me like a coal
From off thine altar. Surely, if they heard
By thy permission, every listening soul
Would shun his Hell and seek thy Heaven. Then
I pray Thee, Father, let me speak to men!"

THE PREACHER'S PROBLEM.

The living creature stood, at noon, before
His reeking hovel and its open door,
Within whose feverish shadow, hot and lewd,
Festered the filthy life of his base brood:
Around him fell the light:
Behind him cowered the night:

Tall, hairy, sinewy, thick-limbed, broad and strong;
Sinewed like evil; ribbed and boned like wrong;
Low-browed, square-jawed, and with large animal eyes,
Whose jutting hoods crept o'er their swollen size
In cavernous covert wide,
Their wild-beast watch to hide:

The evil of his fathers, and his own,
Leered furtively through grimy seams, thick grown,

Up and across, like prison-window bars
To which the convict soul might press its scars
And cast its envious glare
On all things pure and fair.

From that strange front, that yet so human seemed,
The lurking spirit's lust and seeking gleamed:
The greed of gold no mines nor mints could sate;
The cruel, hungry, object-hunting hate;
The treason that no lie
Might shame its treachery by;

The dull, cold lechery, itself a sting,
Full-venomed, as of reptiles in the spring;
These, and a bubbling brew of memories vile,
Seethed dumbly at the lips of his drawn smile,
As if Hell grinned to see
What gluttony might be.

Long generations, sin and misery fed,
Crept on through vales of slime till they had bred
Their fruit of these last days that upright stood,
Heir of them all, in shameless hardihood,
Flesh, blood, bone, force and fraud—
Red clay, unbreathed of God.

So stewed this cess-pool, rotted this foul fen:—
Come; measure; fathom; Oh ye pulpit men,

Deep-studied, wise, long-sermoned, solemn-prayered;
For in this being is earth's problem bared
And naked for your gaze
In the bright noontide blaze.

Here is humanity's mute, brute appeal;
If God be with you, come, for you can heal.
God is not straitened; Christ hath conquered; then,
You who are Christ's and God's, bring back again
The angel of His grace
To shine through that dark face.

The leper and the demon and the blind
Have risen before you, in one shape combined,
But Christ is strong, and still God's word is true.
Have ye forgotten? Is there power with you
To bid this form obscene,
Be human and be clean?

CHARITY.

A Ballad of the Coal-famine in 1871.

The tenement-house was tall and old,
The wind was high and bitter cold

That o'er its roof was sweeping;
The frost clung fast to every pane,
Save where for glass it sought in vain
With chill and ghostly creeping.

The garret-room was gaunt and bare,
For Want had climbed the topmost stair
To find itself a dwelling;
The cupboard mocked the hungry grate,
The upturned bowl and empty plate
A leaner history telling.

The widow sat beside the bed,
From which one white-faced, curly head
Peeped out to see and hear her;
The loved ones God had helped away
Were safe in heaven, but this poor clay
Was nearer and was dearer.

The smile was sweet, the eyes were bright—
"O mother, 'tis so cold to-night,"
The little wan lips quivered.
The mother smiled, or tried to smile,
Though keen the blast blew o'er her, while
The blanket near her shivered.

"No fire to-night, my child," she said,
"And they lie warmer who are dead,

But 'tis no cause for sorrow ;
To-day we had to eat, but then
We'll skip the bread and warm again
And have some coal, to-morrow."

A clanging sound rang through the night—
"What ? nine o'clock ! Can that be right ?
And all this work unfinished ? "
'Twas but the loud alarm for fire,
And half it chimed with her desire
To have the cold diminished.

"Oh mother, shall we nevermore
Have bread and fire, as once before,
Come on one day together ? "
"No, darling, no," the widow said ;
"It takes one day to earn the bread,
And one to fight the weather.

"I only mean to work till twelve—
We'll think of those who dig and delve
To send us coals for fire.
To-morrow, when the shirts I hem,
My sewing will be all for them—
God help, if coal is higher ! "

"Oh mother, I'm a lump of ice !
But don't you, mother, think it's nice

To know that we are easing
The troubles of those railway men,
And helping feed them, even when
The garret is so freezing?"

One long-drawn sigh the widow spent—
"Yes, darling, we must be content,
Although the night is chilling,
To think, whatever we endure,
'Tis but to help the railway poor."
"Yes, mother, I am willing."

The patient widow stitched away,
Her pallid darling shivering lay,
The ice-wind swept the garret;
But, though each frosted limb might ache,
'Twas for poor railway coalmen's sake
And charity could bear it.

Lords of the shaft, the mine, the rail,
Of fuel stores that never fail,
Hard gripe the freezing city—
These garret roofs to Him are glass,
And God sees through them as they pass
Beneath His eyes of pity.

THE STORY OF SATURDAY.

'Twas on a hot, Judæan Saturday—
  Though not so named at that time—and the sun,
That steady worker, poured a tireless ray
Upon the ripening vineyards, and the play
  Of the glad fountains gurgled o'er with fun.

The world rolled steadily onward towards the east;
  The unseen stars their glittering courses kept;
The ocean never from his labor ceased;
The rivers ran; the flowers their bloom increased;
  And, on his wings of love, no angel slept.

With reverence low each reverend head to greet,
  Full clad in righteousness and robes of state,
The scribes and Pharisees, in Moses' seat,
Sat, ready law and judgment all to mete,
  And not one jot or tittle to abate.

These doctors of that old divinity,
  Perfect in creed, infallible in law,
Rigid with hide-bound text and special plea,
Had heard that One had come who dared be free
  And from Himself His right to freedom draw.

And they had power, too, in that time and place,
  And so, before their theocratic ring
Was dragged the offender, bearing in his face,

For all his fisher's garb, a comely grace
And dignity that had beseemed a king.

A Galilean :—worse, a Nazarene!
Poor, friendless, weaponless, a child of toil,
Of lineage low, and yet with such a mien,
So even too high for pride, and so serene
In holy majesty, that not the oil

On Aaron's beard or David's royal brow
Had such anointing evidenced. The crowd
Fell back, with many a servile beck and bow,
From round the culprit, and the doctors now
Spoke their demands in accents lordly loud :

"Why hast thou dared profane the Day?" they said ;
"The day on which no mortal may do aught?
Were Sabbaths made for slaves to win their bread?
Speak, Galilean! Guilt is on thy head!"
The Nazarene had bent, as if in thought,

Or if the stones beneath their secrets told
To His deep eyes, but now He slowly raised
A sunburned, manly front, the clouded gold
Of whose loose locks the free wind backward rolled,
And calmly on that grim tribunal gazed.

Lawyer and doctor, Pharisee and scribe,
  Gathered his robe more closely round his feet,
Muttered a text or smiled a pious gibe
Beneath the eagle beak that marked his tribe,
  And forward leaned, that speaking face to meet.

Their eyes saw nothing but the fisher's dress,
  Nor marked the wondrous manhood of the face
Now raised above it, bright with holiness
And truth and power, that shone forth none the less
  That thus 'twas answering in the culprit's place.

"One bunch of grapes I gathered by the road;
  One leper did I send home, whole and clean;
One ass I lightened of his weary load;
One devil hastened to his own abode;
  One blind man showed the light he ne'er had seen:

"For I was hungry and I needed food;
  Demoniac, leper, blind, they all were men;
No beast too low for help, however rude;
Not the day only but the deeds were good—
  The altar sanctifies the gift!—What then?"

Dumb were the scribes: the Pharisees were dumb;
  The mocking multitude crept mute away;
Though nature worked and laughed, the "law" was
    mum;

For, in that Galilean, One had come
  Higher than "law," to liberate His day.

THE DEACON'S PRAYER.

The stanzas marked with an asterisk were published in the New York *Daily Tribune*, May, 1871.

* In the regular evening meeting
  That the church holds, every week,
One night a listening angel sat
  To hear them pray and speak.

Thinned out, on the left of the pulpit,
  Were the men, in a sombre column,
And the women, who sat in rows on the right,
  Were carefully dressed and solemn.

It puzzled the soul of the angel
  Why some to that gathering came,
But sick and sinful hearts were there,
  With grief and guilt aflame.

Sad seekers, who thought, in coming,
  To meet God in that place,
And half they hoped and half they feared
  That prospect of His grace.

They were silent, yet said to the angel—
"Our lives have need of Him"—
And doubt, with dull, vague, throbbing pain,
Stirred through their spirits dim.

You could see 'twas the regular meeting,
And the regular seats were filled;
And all knew who would pray and talk,
Though any one might that willed.

* From his place in front, near the pulpit,
In his customary way,
When the Book was read and the hymn was sung,
The deacon arose to pray.

His wrinkled face was lifted,
And his hard lips came apart,
But the words too readily rose, and fast,
To have worked their way through his heart.

* First came the long preamble—
If Peter had opened so
He had been, ere the Lord his prayer had heard,
Full fifty fathom below.

* Then a volume of information
Poured forth as if to the Lord,
Concerning His ways and attributes
And the things by Him abhorred.

* But not in the list of the latter
Was mentioned the mocking breath
Of the hypocrite prayer that is not prayer,
And the make-believe life in death.

When the budget of news was completed,
The deacon began to plead,
With hard-shut eyes and vigorous gasp,
For an infinite range of need :

* He prayed for the church and the pastor
And that souls might be his hire—
Whatever his stipend otherwise—
And the Sunday-school ; and the choir ;

* And the swarming hordes of India ;
And the perishing, vile Chinese ;
And the millions who bow to the Pope of Rome ;
And the pagan churches of Greece ;

* And the outcast remnants of Judah,
Of whose guilt he had much to tell—
He prayed, or at least he said he prayed,
For everything out of hell.

'Twas a wide and a wonderful charity
That spoke in the deacon's prayer,
And well he deemed of his own good heart
That for all of God's work took care.

* Now if all that burden had truly
Been weighing upon his soul,
'Twould have sunk him through to the China side
And raised a hill over the hole.

. . . .

* 'Twas the regular evening meeting
And the regular prayers were made,
But the listening angel told the Lord
That only the silent prayed.

THE BANKER'S CLIENT.

October, 1873.

"Busy? Of course, a man like you,
Making a fortune a day for yourself,—
You lucky dog, and for others too.
Well, I won't keep you an inch of time;
These figures, that's all you've got to do
And just this lift is all I want
To pull me forever and ever through.

"Can't do it? What's all that? Not lend
On such collaterals! Not at all!
And this to me? I say, old friend,
What's up? The paper's good, my name—
Not me? Impossible! You suspend?
The railroads did it? I always thought
That folly would come to some such end.

"You were getting rich too fast that way;
Building too much, I always said—
But then, I know you're sharp; I say,
Between ourselves, of course, you'll do
This drop-in-the-bucket of mine, to-day?
Hang panics! We understand these things:
The Street won't mind if you never pay.

"You won't? Failed honest? Ah, just so—
I'll draw my little balance, I think,
And go somewhere else. Not that? No!
And you call yourself a Christian, too!
Not pay my check? Stopped? Ruined? Oh
Don't joke! Why, that would ruin me,
Break me! Come, pay me what you owe.

"Some day, you hope? I want it now,
Or I'll know the reason why. Come, come,
Old fellow, it's all right; I know how
These things are managed down here. Who'll care
For a few odd thousands in such a row?
You won't? You scoundrel! I never knew
An honest banker yet, I vow!

THE BABY ATLAS.

An arm and a fist? There's muscle!
What think you of that, for a grip?
Where would Hercules be, or Samson,
If I had either one on the hip?

Not use them? Why, don't I grapple
  Already, with wind and things?
I know I could swim—see that, now!
  About all I need is wings.

I'm going for papa's whiskers:
  I'll get his mustache, some day,
And I'll lift it clean off his features
  And make him believe it's play.

He has too much nose, I'm certain,
  For a man of his age and size—
There! Only six inches further
  And I'd either had that or his eyes.

He thinks I am only a baby,
  But I'm five months old this week,
And to call such a fellow an infant
  Is a fraud of which I won't speak.

Now it surely is time for dinner!
  Why can't they look out for a man!
I could go for it now, baldheaded—
  No one else in the family can.

My fists, or a slice out of papa—
  Was there ever starvation like mine?
I'll squall if it isn't forthcoming,
  For they all know a man must dine.

What's this? Me, taken and lifted,
This reckless way, through the air?
What's that? Ah, I know my dinner,
It's time it was coming—there!

THE KEETER BITE.

"Keeter bite, papa! Just see there!"
The red speck swelled on the round arm fair,
The mosquito's kiss had been given there,
And the child was proud of her punctured skin
And the right to fret, like her grown-up kin.

"Keeter bite?" Verily, I've had mine,
Puffing and swelling and smarting fine—
Scratch 'em and show 'em, then they'll shine,
And who would pine in the world, alone,
With no red, irritant boast of his own?

She was a baby! But who has met
The grown-up child who was satisfied, yet,
Till his grievances gave him the right to fret?
We all come short of our perfect bliss
Till we're able to show the mosquito's kiss.

ARMY MEMORIES.

Written for the Anniversary Meeting of the Army of the Potomac, held at Harrisburg, Penn., May, 1874.

The clock of time is surely wrong,
The hands are forward set;
It cannot be so many years
Have flown since first we met.

The dial, sure, ought not to read—
"May, eighteen seventy-four!"
'Tis eighteen sixty-one, to-day,
Or just a few years more.

We must have turned aside awhile,
To pleasures or to cares,
And all these days, like scouts or spies,
Got past us unawares.

Well, let them go; we will not ask
The dial to turn back,
While we, in memory, march again
Our battle-studded track.

For we, to-day, in heart and soul,
Thank God for all His grace,
That He has brought us once again,
Thus kindly, face to face.

And if the years have gone away,
Fled they or swift or slow,
They have not stolen one precious thing
We treasured, years ago.

Our country? Still unbroken spreads
The land we love so well,
And how we love her only those
Who fought for her can tell.

Our flag? Old glory? There it flies,
The beacon of the free,
While towards it lean, with longing eyes,
The nations yet to be.

Our Union? Strong and stronger yet
The tie that bound us when
Around its heart the nation drew
Its belt of armèd men.

Our homes? Each well-defended hearth
Its welcome gives us still,
And safely rise the sheltering roofs
O'er valley, coast, and hill.

Our youth and strength? No, no, not lost!
Ten times we hold our own
The gifts that, in our country's need,
Were on her altar thrown.

No, not one treasure that was ours
The years have borne away,
But all we had in "sixty-one"
Is dearly ours, to-day.

Our comrades? Are they gone from us,
The gallant hearts and true,
Because around this board to-day
These many seem but few?

Not gone, to memory's reveille;
Not gone, to glory's drum;
With every bugle-note of fame
That sounds, again they come.

The mighty columns gather fast,
The graves give up their dead,
And history's highways tremble with
The thunder of their tread.

They come from old Potomac's banks,
They gather from the James,
From Cumberland and Tennessee
They answer to their names.

Now, while Fame's adjutant prepares
To call his roll once more,
We'll sing the song the people sang
For eighteen sixty-four.

THE HYMN OF 1864.

What shall we do when the soldiers come home
again?
When the last tocsin of war shall have pealed,
When the sweet sunshine of peace shall have come
again,
When the last rebel his weapon shall yield,—
What shall we do when our heroes come home
again?

What shall we do when our remnants come home
again,
All who survive the four terrible years?
All the glad cannon shall rattle and boom again,
Welcome shall tremble with laughter and tears,
When the good God lets our heroes come home
again.

What of the martyrs who will not come home
again?
What of the far southern graves where they sleep?
What of the still feet that never may roam again?
What of the homes where their waiting ones
weep?
What of the heroes who do not come home again?

Love and remembrance shall bring them all home
again,
Bannered and glorious, all the great host;

And at each banquet the wine-cup shall foam again
When we recall those who fell at their post,—
So shall it be when our heroes come home again.

Oh, in that day when our soldiers come home again,
Scarred and war-battered, way-weary and worn,
Living or dead, we shall see them all come again,
Bearing their sacred flags, blood-starred and torn,—
So, to our hearts, shall our heroes come home again.

Ten years, ten great, strong, full-lived years,
Have swept away, since then,
And still the warm hearts welcome home
Their hosts of war-worn men.

Hark, now, the summoning voice that calls
For those who may not hear !
The glorious names to soldier pride
And loving memory dear.

What if, within our hearts, arise
Names that we may not speak ?
No shame there is in moistening eyes
And pallor in the cheek.

The eyes are shut that might have wept
For us, as we for them,
And cold the brows whose battle-flush
Was like a diadem.

Oh, true is every thought that mourns
And every tear we shed—
He's false to all the living who
Is false unto the dead.

The dead? Have we forgot the song
The gathering army sang
When first the summons to the field
Through all the Union rang?

Is old John Brown's the only soul
That marches onward yet?
Is Ellsworth's name the only star
Of fame that ne'er will set?

Above their mouldering bones the sod
In brightening green may rest,
But they are with us, living still,
Our bravest hearts and best.

Nor they alone: have we not felt
The mystic, inward thrill
Which tells us how our absent ones
Are here, in thought and will?

We cannot hear their shadowy feet
  Come up the silent stairs;
We cannot make their welcome forms
  Come in and fill the chairs;

But kindly smiles around us beam,
  Unseen, though not less dear,—
Come, comrades, let us dream our dream!
  'Tis only once a year.

How many are there here, to-day,
  Who went to war for fun
And filed across the creaking bridge
  In July, Sixty-one?

Behind us was the capital
  That we had come to save,
And every man felt fit to be
  A rebel regiment's grave.

We only dreamed of quick success
  And every mother's son
Had brought along a diary
  To keep for victories won.

It was not brave McDowell's fault
  That, when our courage sank
And back we climbed across the bridge,
  Each diary still was blank.

All honor to the noble heart
That still stood strongly by
The good old flag, unmoved because
That stroke had gone awry.

All honor to the sterling soul
Whose courage never failed—
We'll take Joe Johnston's word that his
Was not the part that failed.

Upon his shoulders fell the load
That few but he could bear,
And well his country understands
That he was faithful, there.

When next he marches o'er a bridge,
May we be there to see,
And the gallant men who follow him
All three-year veterans be.

They say he suns his face, to-day,
Beneath Italian skies,
The chief around whose warrior name
Our next proud memories rise.

They must be wrong! Though not with us,
McClellan sure must be,
At least in memory, marching on
Against the hosts of Lee.

We hope not through some swamp campaign
  Of hunger, rain, and mud,
We'd rather that he faced again
  Antietam's day of blood.

The soldier's heart would fain forget
  The weary winter-camp
And only hear, in "harking back,"
  The battle's charging tramp;

Yet loves not less the chief who bore,
  With him, war's drearier days,
Than those to whom returning peace
  Held out the conqueror's bays.

JOHN POPE? We know full well, this hour,
  Where his headquarters be,
And what is in the saddle now
  Wherever chargeth he:

We laugh, but still, in justice, add
  "He made a gallant fight
Against great odds and desperate days
  And he is ours, by right."

Ah, many were the brave fights lost,
And loth were we to bring
Their shades to mingle with the light
Of this memorial ring,

But, out of one dark, sore defeat,
A victory rises now
Whose wreath would add a priceless crown
To Cæsar's laurelled brow:

Still BURNSIDE stands, bright-eyed and firm,
In LINCOLN'S inner room,
And claims from him to take the blame
Of Fredericksburg's deep gloom.

The day was lost, the MEN remained,
And, now the war is done,
We deem that victory over self
For all the nation won.

JOE HOOKER? Still around his brow
Green grow the clustering wreaths,
And "fighting Joe" is still, for us,
The bravest man that breathes.

Who would not follow where he led,
On glory's widening track?
Would he were on some field again
And we were at his back.

And now a well-loved name is heard
From out the silence dim:
Come, comrades, rise upon your feet
And fill unto the brim!

In one grand, noble company,
We'll range our gallant dead—
And they have marched for Gettysburg
And MEADE is at their head.

Hark, to the rising slogan-cry!
The bugle notes combine
With the rumble of artillery wheels
Along the southern line.

The hills of Maryland mutter back
The invader's ceaseless drum,
For Lee is o'er the border now
And the day of wrath has come!

Oh, gallant men were they who marched
Behind the rebel flag,
And stubbornly they strove to win
The valley and the crag.

We deem them erring, know them wrong,
But grieve that such as they
Were doomed to fall like ripened corn
Before our lines, that day.

Give them the soldier's meed of praise,
And with it join the prayer
That when the next great trial comes
They may stand with us there.

Out, every coward pulse of hate,
Each thought of vengeance due!
They erred, but even in error they
Were gallant souls and true.

Were MEADE and REYNOLDS with us here,
With all who passed away,
They'd surely join with us to sing
The "wearing of the gray."

THE WEARING OF THE GRAY.

I know he was a soldier,
And I know he wore the gray,
And I know he wore it bravely
Through many a bloody fray;
I know he fought against the flag
That o'er him waves to-day,
But must I always hate him
For wearing of the gray?

I know he was a soldier,
I know him by his tread,

By his frank and gallant bearing
And the proud toss of his head ;
But now the war is over,
And this is peace, to-day,
I cannot always hate him
For wearing of the gray.

I know he was a soldier,
And that is much to me,
Whether by broad Potomac
Or winding Tennessee
He met me, in the jacket
He may not wear to-day,
And I cannot always hate him
For wearing of the gray.

I know he was a soldier,
And would that he might stand,
In any coming struggle,
With his rifle in his hand,
Shoulder to shoulder with me
Through all the battle-day—
And so I cannot hate him
For wearing of the gray.

Oh what a muster-roll is ours !
How bright the record shines !
Like some vast forest of the North,
Grown all of giant pines,

Beneath whose shade the meaner shrubs
Die out, the trunks between,
Our forest has no underbrush,
And the soil it guards is clean.

And yet, some trees above the rest
Lift crowns of matchless pride ;
In every charge there's one brave crest,
Behind which others ride.

O sad days of the Wilderness !
O bitter, closing strife !
When every inch a struggle cost,
And every step a life !

On that red line he fought it out,
The heart of adamant—
The nation made its iron will
A man, and called it GRANT !

Well did he know how strong the gripe
Of his right hand must be,
While SHERMAN cleft the mountain-wall
And marched upon the sea ;

While, in the Valley, SHERIDAN
Was scattering Early's chaff,
That " whirling up the valley " went,
Like foam before a laugh ;

While Hood was pressing madly on
In what he deemed pursuit;
And THOMAS would not shake the tree
Till ripe was all the fruit.

Strong was the griping hand that held,
And well the soldiers knew
Their bloody work was winding up,
Their toil was almost through.

Great voices of the glorious past,
Proud muster-roll of fame!
The festal hour fleets all too fast
To call each honored name.

We hear them, in our heart of hearts,
And full of grief we bow
In memory of the old-time friends
Who are not with us now.

The battle-days, the camp-fire talks,
March, bivouac, retreat—
All come to mind to-day, except
The memories of defeat.

These, too, would come, in bitter truth,
Knew we not, by this light,
That in the war's supreme result
All else passed out of sight.

THE END.

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Verses of Many Days

William Osborn Stoddard